DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 440 114 TM 030 717

AUTHOR	Arter, Judy; Nutting, Bill
TITLE	Student Assessment Mini-Lessons for Your Staff.
INSTITUTION	Northwest Regional Educational Lab., Portland, OR. Assessment and Evaluation Program.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	249p.
CONTRACT	RJ96006501
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC10 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Standards; Elementary Secondary Education; *Evaluation Methods; *Faculty Development; Scoring Rubrics; *Student Evaluation; *Test Construction; Test Use; *Testing
IDENTIFIERS	Large Scale Assessment

ABSTRACT

This set of mini-lessons contains staff meeting activities to help a school's staff understand large-scale standards-based assessment and promote student achievement through improved classroom assessment practice. These lessons contain a clear statement of what teachers need to know and be able to do with respect to student assessment. They include a version of content standards for teachers. They also present performance criteria (rubrics) for assessing the quality of classroom assessments based on the content standards, and sample assessments scored using the rubrics with explanations of the scores. Teacher self-assessment development continua are presented so that teachers can evaluate their own strengths and learning needs. The lessons also contain training activities principals can use in staff meetings to develop teacher assessment knowledge and skills. The 17 mini-lessons are supplemented by 4 appendixes that contain overheads and handouts, sample assessments, references and resources, and the self-assessment development continua. (Contains 16 references.) (SLD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 440 114

student assessment
mini-lessons
for your staff

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

TM030717

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
Assessment and Evaluation Program

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

---

ambiguous, instruction can take students to vastly different places and assessments can be vastly different. The goal here is *not* to standardize instruction; rather, the goal is to aim at the same learning target, even if teachers have different instructional designs.

Learning targets also need to be clear enough so that those who find or write assessment items and tasks have the same interpretation of what should be covered as those who wrote the target statements. Will future teachers interpret them the same? Are the interpretations clear enough so that users can implement them effectively? For example, how would one design an assessment for "communicates well?" The assessment could be anything from writing an essay to observing students on the playground as they informally communicate with their peers.

Targets can be unclear for lots of different reasons. In our experience when trying to design assessments to match ambiguous content standards, we have noted the following sources of confusion:

1. Is it clear what cognitive level is being assessed? Is it recall of facts or higher-order thinking? For example, the word "know" in targets can be interpreted in many ways. How will students act when they "know?" Rote recall of facts, like restating definitions? Or is "knowing" demonstrated through picking out new examples (or counter examples) of the principle, restating the principle in one's own words, or independently using the principle when engaged in real-life tasks?

Caution...striking a balance between detail and over-restrictiveness can be tricky. We want targets clear enough that we can all agree on what student success looks like, but not so detailed that "these 10 things" are all we mean. Or, even worse, that "these 300 things" are exactly what we mean.

2. How will assessment of targets repeated across subject areas be handled? Common repeated targets include group skills, oral presentations, critical thinking, study skills, and interpreting and using graphs. Is there a fundamental difference in how these repeated targets are expressed in different subjects? If so, how will the assessments be different? If not, how will the assessments be the same? How will instruction and assessment complement each other to give a full picture of all aspects of repeated targets? Should repeated targets be assessed as part of subject area assessments, or separately?

3. Are there any holes in the statement of essential learning targets for students? Are there important targets not covered anywhere? Do targets reflect current thinking about what expertise in a content area looks like? A standards-based assessment can be only as good as the target statements on which it is based.

Rule of thumb: *Is the target clear enough that a group of teachers would agree on the range of knowledge, skills, and performance implied by the target? Would they agree on what to teach and what to assess?*

Student Assessment *Mini-Lessons* for Your Staff

Staff meeting activities to help your staff understand large-scale standards-based assessment and promote student achievement through improved classroom assessment practice

Judy Arter, NWREL
and
Bill Nutting, Principal, Lincoln School,
Mt. Vernon School District, Washington

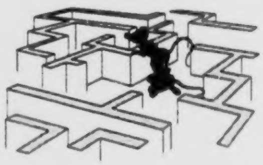
© Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1998
101 SW Main, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97204
(503) 275-9500; http://www.nwrel.org

Permission is granted for reproduction of these materials for use in training.

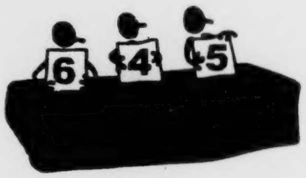
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

This handbook was produced with funds from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract #RJ96006501.

Special Features of This Handbook



- A clear statement of what teachers need to know and be able to do with respect to student assessment—content standards for teachers. (See pp. 7-24.)



- Performance criteria (rubrics) for assessing the quality of classroom assessments based on the content standards. (See **Appendix B** and *Mini-Lesson #13.*)
- Sample classroom assessments scored using the rubrics, complete with explanations of the scores. (See **Appendix B** and *Mini-Lesson #13.*)

- Teacher self-assessment developmental continuums in the area of student assessment so that teachers can determine for themselves where their strengths and learning needs are with respect to student assessment. These developmental continuums are also based on the content standards. (See **Appendix D** and *Mini-Lesson #17.*)

- Training activities that principals can use in staff meetings to help develop the knowledge and skills teachers need to assess students well.

Table of Contents

Page

Navigating the Mini-Lessons 1

What Is a *Mini-Lesson?* 1
Why Might You Need the *Mini-Lessons*? 1
What Teachers Need to Know About Student Assessment 2
Structure of the *Mini-Lessons* 2
Reference Guide 2
Footers 3
What the *Mini-Lessons* Are Not 3
Evaluating Teacher Progress in Learning to Assess Students Better 3

Keys to Quality Student Assessment 4

Key 1: Clear and Appropriate Learning Targets 7
Key 2: Focused and Appropriate Users and Uses 12
Key 3: Appropriate Methods (Target-Method Match) 16
Key 4: Sampling 19
Key 5: Eliminating Potential Sources of Bias and Distortion 22

Assessment Mini-Lesson Reference Guide 25

Mini-Lessons Each lesson numbered separately

Mini-Lesson #1: *Quality Assessment Jigsaw*
Mini-Lesson #2: *What Do We Want Students to Do?*
Mini-Lesson #3: *Barrier of Time*
Mini-Lesson #4: *This Too Shall Pass*
Mini-Lesson #5: *Connecting Assessment With Reporting*
Mini-Lesson #6: *What's the Match?*
Mini-Lesson #7: *Do We Know Our Target?*
Mini-Lesson #8: *A Success Story*
Mini-Lesson #9: *Sam's Story*
Mini-Lesson #10: *Assessment Principles*
Mini-Lesson #11: *Here Are the Assessment Results... What Do We Do Next?*
Mini-Lesson #12: *Working Backwards From Report Card to Teaching*
Mini-Lesson #13: *Green Light, Red Flag*
Mini-Lesson #14: *Grading, The Issue Is Not How But Why*
Mini-Lesson #15: *What's Essential?*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Mini-Lesson #16: *Changing Assessment Practices*
Mini-Lesson #17: *Teacher Self-Assessment, View From the Classroom*
Mini-Lesson #18: *Hey, These Targets Aren't as Clear as We Thought*

Appendix A: Overheads and Handouts Used in Several Mini-Lessons

Five Keys to Quality Assessment—Handout
Five Keys to Quality Assessment—Overhead
Sample Reading Content Standards (McREL)
Sample Oral Communication Content Standards (McREL)
Sample Mathematics Content Standards (McREL)

Appendix B: Sample Classroom Assessments Analyzed for Quality

#1 Checklist of Assessment Quality — Each section numbered separately
#2 Green Light/Red Flag
#3 Tall Tales and Fables—assessment
#4 Tall Tales and Fables—analysis
#5 Reading Rate—assessment
#6 Reading Rate—analysis
#7 Interview Assessment—assessment
#8 Interview Assessment—analysis

Appendix C: References and Resources

Clear Targets 1
Educator Preparation for Student Assessment 1
Effects of Assessment on Students and instruction 2
Group Study on Assessment Topics 2
Technical Quality 3

Appendix D: Self-Assessment Developmental Continuums

Key 1: Clear and Appropriate Learning Targets 1
Key 2: Focused and Appropriate Users and Uses 5
Key 3: Appropriate Methods (Target-Method Match) 7
Keys 4 & 5: Sampling and Eliminating Potential Sources of Bias and Distortion 9

Navigating the *Mini-Lessons*

What Is a *Mini-Lesson*?

Studying student assessment doesn't have to be boring! We've all heard the groans and protests when a half-day mandatory workshop on assessment is announced (especially if it's after school). So, how about something different? How about some short, engaging excursions into the topic of assessment that focus on issues of most concern to teachers and are conducted in an engaging, hands-on manner? This is the purpose of the *Mini-Lessons*.

A *Mini-Lesson* is a brief professional development activity on the topic of student assessment. Most are designed to fit within an hour staff meeting, although they could be used in other settings as well.

The goal is to build student assessment proficiency in teaching staffs. One part of assessment proficiency is becoming familiar with local large-scale assessments, so several *Mini-Lessons* have this focus. However, since the study of student assessment should not end with a state or district assessment, there are other *Mini-Lessons* as well, such as improving grading and the day-to-day assessments in the classroom.

Why Might You Need the *Mini-Lessons*?

Teachers are expected to assess students at a level that is unprecedented. Increasingly, teachers are being asked to keep track of student progress toward complex learning outcomes, such as critical thinking, writing, group collaboration, visual communication, and life-long learning. They need to not only know how to assess these things well, but also how to manage the information that is being generated, how to communicate student achievement to others, and how to improve student achievement by involving students in the assessment process.

⊂ Related *Mini-Lessons*:

Mini-Lessons related to the rationale for changes in assessment are:

#10—*Assessment Principles*

#16—*Changing Assessment Practices*

But, teachers don't just need to know about assessment to meet the demands of others. When teachers feel confident about where students are going and how to measure their success, anxiety levels decrease. When teachers know how to involve students in the assessment process, student achievement increases. When teachers know how to design good assessment, unintended negative side-effects of assessment on students decrease. So learning about student assessment shouldn't be about fulfilling mandates. It should be about increasing teacher comfort and confidence, improving student achievement, and enhancing the positive (rather than negative) effects that assessing can have on students.

Study after study shows that most teachers didn't adequately learn how to assess students when they were in preservice education and that they are not currently confident assessors of student achievement. (A list of studies is included in **Appendix C**.) The goal of the *Mini-Lessons* is to provide a resource to help change this situation.

What Teachers Need to Know About Student Assessment

Just as we ask teachers to have a clear idea of what they want students to know and be able to do so that they can focus instruction for students, we need a clear picture of what teachers need to know about and be able to do with respect to student assessment, so that we can, likewise, focus instruction. Thus, each *Mini-Lesson* is cross-referenced to an overriding conceptual structure for quality assessment. This structure makes it clear which teacher skills or knowledge are being developed through each activity, and how it fits into a whole plan for enhancing assessment proficiency.

Structure of the *Mini-Lessons*

All *Mini-Lessons* include purpose, rationale, prerequisites, time required, focus, materials needed, a facilitator's outline that provides a suggested script to kick off the activity, and a description of how to do each step.

As much as possible, all needed handouts and overheads are included with each activity. Sometimes users will need their local content standards, assessments, score reports, or other material. If an activity requires material that is not provided, it is clearly noted.

Reference Guide

The reference guide provides a suggested order for doing the *Mini-Lessons*. Page 25 contains suggestions for those just beginning their study of assessment and those in the middle of their study; page 26 provides a list for those more advanced in their assessment study. *Mini-Lessons* are numbered in the order they were developed, not necessarily in the order they'll be used.

Footers

Each *Mini-Lesson* is paginated separately to make it easy to update or add to as needed. The footer on each *Mini-Lesson* is designed to help you find activities and put them back in order. The footer lists the *Mini-Lesson* number, title, and page number. So, if you've decided to use, for example, **Mini-Lesson #9**, find the #9 footer and pull pages you need to copy.

What the *Mini-Lessons* Are Not

The *Mini-Lessons* are *not* intended to be a complete course on student assessment. They do not cover all the information and practice teachers might need to become expert assessors of students. Rather, they represent interesting and engaging assessment situations and dilemmas for teachers to work out. They are designed to address common teacher questions and concerns that relate to assessment; they are also designed to pique teacher's interest in assessment as a topic for further study.

Mini-Lessons are only one part of a comprehensive professional development plan in student assessment. There are really only three options available for any type of professional development: workshops (including these *Mini-Lessons*); collaborative learning groups; and self-study, such as taking courses. Please consider these *Mini-Lessons* as a beginning, not an ending. Group study assistance is referenced in **Appendix C**.

Evaluating Teacher Progress in Learning to Assess Students Better

As with students, teachers need to see their learning with respect to assessment. Three procedures are provided in the *Mini-Lessons*: learning journals, self-ratings (**Appendix D** and **Mini-Lesson #17**), and evaluating the quality of classroom assessment products (**Appendix B** and **Mini-Lesson #13**). Teachers might prepare a portfolio in which, at the very start of assessment study, they place their best classroom assessment with an analysis of why they think it is good. Then, as assessment study continues (perhaps once a month), teachers could place additional assessments in a portfolio with analyses of why they think they are good. At the end of assessment study, teachers could compare their assessments and write-ups over time to describe how they've changed. Hopefully, both their assessments and explanations of quality will have gotten more sophisticated. These assessment samples could be supplemented with self-assessments using the continuums in **Appendix D**. Teachers could use their learning journals to help track their learning progress.

Practice with evaluating assessments for quality is provided in **Mini-Lesson #13**—*Green Light/Red Flag*; self-evaluation is the focus of **Mini-Lesson #17**—*Teacher Self-Assessment*.

Keys to Quality Student Assessment[1]

Good quality assessments at any level:

- **Arise from clear and appropriate student learning targets**. *What* are we, as educators, trying to assess? We must clearly and completely define achievement expectations, and these must reflect the best current understanding of each discipline. We can't assess something if we don't have a crystal clear vision of what it is. But, we can have clear learning targets that aren't enduring or essential. So, we also need *appropriate* student learning targets.

  Student learning targets are also called content standards, benchmarks, learning objectives, outcomes, learning goals, and essential academic learning requirements. They all attempt to define clear and appropriate achievement targets for students. In fact, that's what the whole standards-based movement is about. The role of assessment, then, is to align with these content standards or targets.

- **Serve a focused and appropriate purpose.** *Why* are these targets being assessed? Who will use the results and what will they be used for? Purpose affects how one assesses. But, *focused* doesn't necessarily mean *good*—one can have focused purposes for assessment that are *poor* purposes (such as assessing for the sole purpose of tracking students), so one also needs to make sure that purposes are *appropriate*.

- **Rely on an appropriate method.** *How* will one assess the achievement targets? Will these methods accurately reflect the achievement targets and purposes? When is the best time to use multiple choice, essay, performance assessments, or portfolios?

- **Sample student achievement appropriately.** *How much* will we collect? Can we be confident that results really reflect what a student knows and can do?

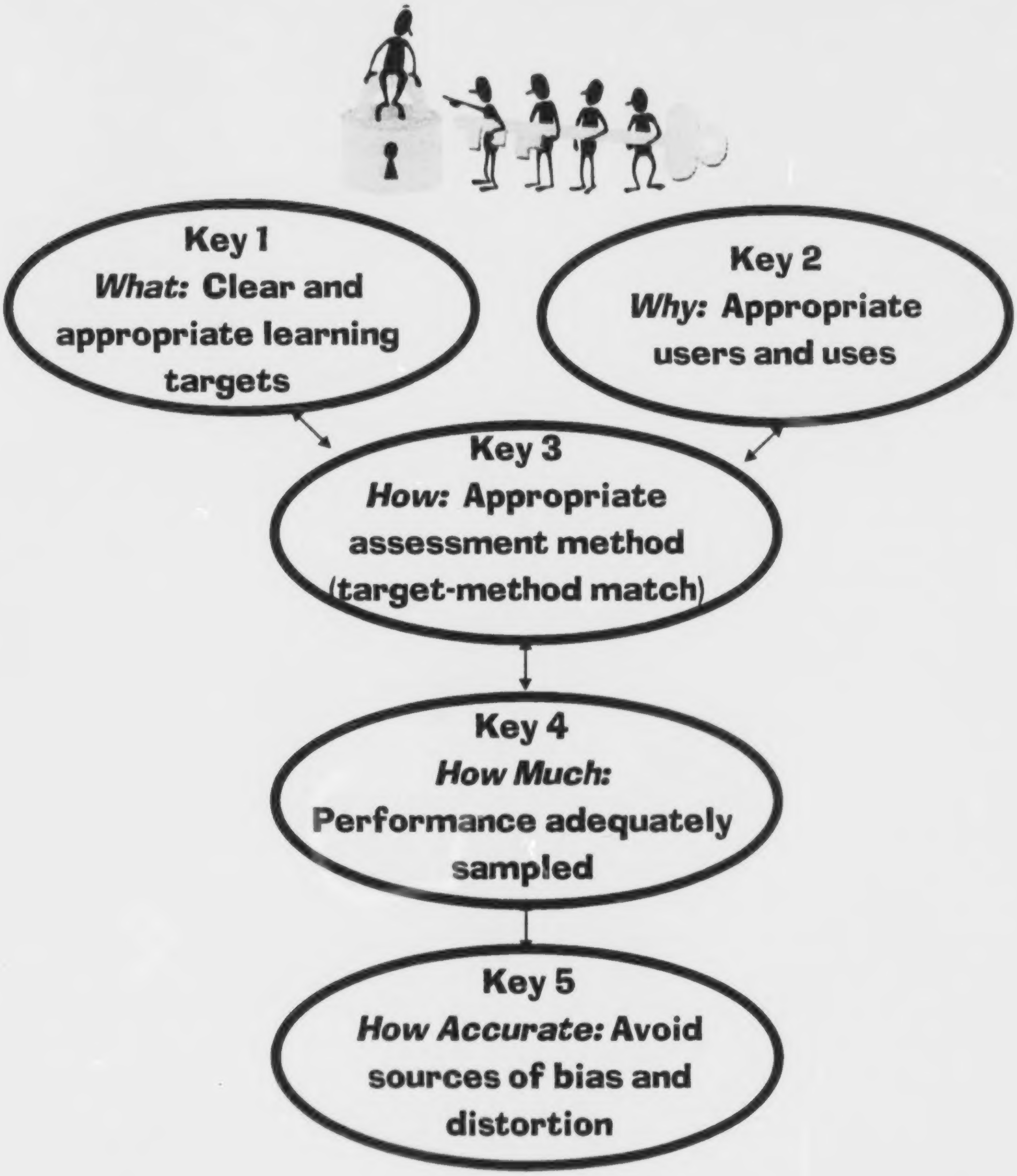
- **Eliminate possible sources of bias and distortion.** *How accurate* is the information obtained? Is there anything in the manner in which an achievement target is assessed that masks the true ability of a student or group of students? Can one be confident that results really reflect what a student knows and can do? Technical terms for the notion of reducing bias and distortion are: *reliability*, *validity*, *fairness*, and *equity*.

---

[1] Adapted from Regional Educational Laboratories, *Improving Classroom Assessment: A Toolkit for Professional Developers*, 1998, NWREL, (503) 275-9500; Rick Stiggins, *Student Centered Classroom Assessment*, Prentice-Hall, 1997, pp. 14-17; and earlier work by Rick Stiggins at NWREL.

These keys are also shown in **Figure 1** below. The rest of this section will add more detail to each key.

Figure 1
Five Keys to Quality Student Assessment


Key 1
What: Clear and appropriate learning targets
Key 2
Why: Appropriate users and uses
Key 3
How: Appropriate assessment method (target-method match)
Key 4
How Much: Performance adequately sampled
Key 5
How Accurate: Avoid sources of bias and distortion

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Educators are proficient in assessment to the extent that they can distinguish sound from unsound assessment practices and develop their own assessments using these five standards of assessment quality. These, then, also define what educators need to know and be able to do with respect to assessment: they need to have clear and appropriate learning targets for students; have clear and appropriate purposes for assessing students; use the best assessment method given the purpose and targets; sample student performance appropriately; and, as much as possible, eliminate sources of bias and distortion.

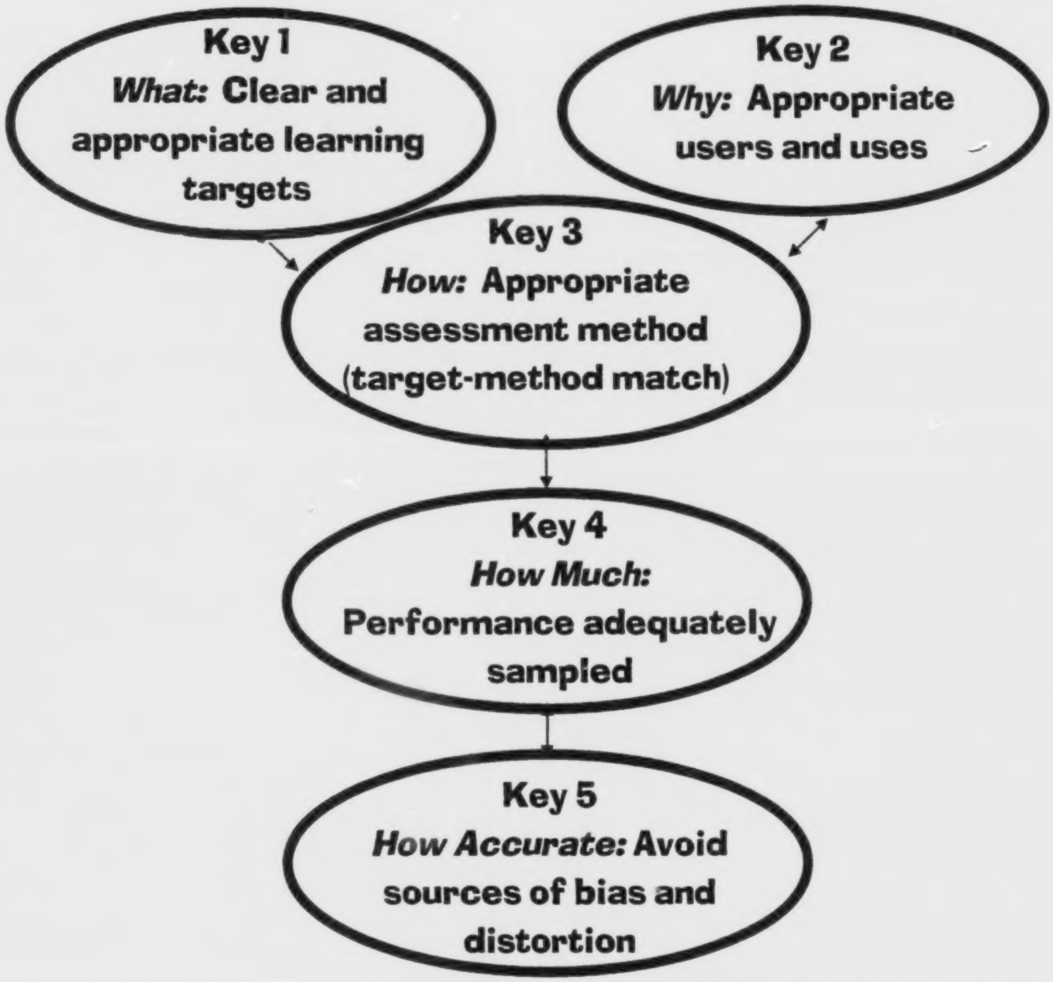
➲ Related *Mini-Lessons*:

Mini-Lesson #17—*Teacher Self-Evaluation: View From the Classroom* asks teachers to self-evaluate their knowledge and application of these five standards of quality. Developmental continuums with indicator statements for each Key are provided in **Appendix D**—*Self-Evaluation Continuums.*

Mini-Lesson #13—*Green Light, Red Flag* provides practice in evaluating the quality of classroom assessments using the Five Keys. Scoring guides for each of the Five Keys, plus three sample scored assessments are provided in **Appendix B**—*Sample Classroom Assessments.*

Just as merely listing desired learning outcomes for students is not enough to ensure that everyone understands what they mean, listing the above assessment competencies for educators does not automatically imply how to build competence in these skills. Therefore, the remainder of this chapter is devoted to describing these skills in more detail. The *Mini-Lessons* themselves serve to build the skills described. And, **Appendix B**—*Sample Classroom Assessments* and **Appendix D**—*Self-Evaluation Continuums* serve to further clarify the skills educators need to assess students well by providing rubrics for and scored samples of classroom assessments.

Key 1–*Clear and Appropriate Learning Targets*


Key 1
What: Clear and appropriate learning targets
Key 2
Why: Appropriate users and uses
Key 3
How: Appropriate assessment method (target-method match)
Key 4
How Much: Performance adequately sampled
Key 5
How Accurate: Avoid sources of bias and distortion

The first key to quality student assessment is having clear and appropriate learning targets. One can't assess something if one doesn't know what it is that is being assessed.

For **Key 1**, we'll tackle three related topics. The first is content standards. Standards-setting activities have blitzed the country over the past eight years and are intended to define the "appropriate" part of the "clear and appropriate student learning targets" equation. So, educators need to know about them. Secondly, we'll address the "clear" part of the equation. Then, finally, we'll present a way to categorize learning targets and discuss why we might want to classify them.

Appropriate Targets/Content Standards. Content standards are statements of what should be taught; they specify the "what" of what students should know and be able to do. Content standards come by many names: benchmarks, outcomes, essential academic learning requirements, skills standards, competencies, common curriculum goals, components, and academic student expectations. Here are some examples:

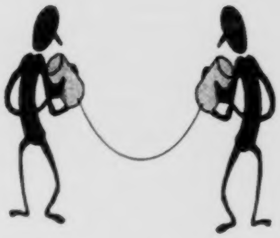
- Oregon, Grades 6-8 Reading Standard: *Demonstrates inferential comprehension of a variety of printed materials.* Related Grade 8 Benchmark: *Identify relationships, images, patterns or symbols and draw conclusions about their meaning.* ("By Grade Level Common Curriculum Goals, Grades 6-8 Content and Performance Standards," Oregon Department of Education, August 1996)
- Washington, Writing Standard, Grades 4-10: *The student writes clearly and effectively.* This standard includes the following components: *develop concept and design* (develop a topic, organize writing thoughts, write coherently and effectively), *use style appropriate to the audience and purpose* (voice, word choice, and sentence fluency), and *apply writing conventions.* (Essential Academic Learning Requirements Technical Manual, Washington State Commission on Student Learning, July 1998)
- National Standards for Business Education, Secondary: *Demonstrate interpersonal, teamwork, and leadership skills necessary to function in multicultural business settings.* (National Standards for Business Education, National Business Education Association, 1995)

"Nothing new," we hear you thinking and, in a very real sense, you're right. The idea of focusing instruction and assessment on that which is most important and enduring is not new. The hard part is coming to agreement on what is important and enduring. Have you ever had disagreements with your colleagues on the most important things to emphasize in instruction? Imagine those discussions on a national scale, and you get the picture. Some of the efforts to set standards read like soap operas. But this only underscores the necessity to do it. How can anyone hold students responsible for different visions of the same outcome? We owe it to our students and ourselves to be clear on our goals and expectations.

⊂ Related *Mini-Lessons*:

In **Mini-Lesson #6**—*Task and Criteria Match*, participants are asked, as part of deciding how to fix an assessment, whether what the teacher is trying to assess is worth assessing at all.

Clear targets. Learning targets for students not only need to be appropriate, they need to be clear. It's easy to agree on a target like "communicates well." But, what does this mean? What type of communication, in what contexts, for which purposes? The key to effective student learning targets, be they at the national, state, district, or classroom level, is that they are specific enough to enable everyone to share the same understanding of what students need to know and be able to do. When targets are



Tricky? You bet. In fact, Joan Herman at UCLA and her colleagues state that available evidence suggests that many states' current standards are not strong enough to support rigorous assessment development. *But, we believe that it's the attempt to clarify targets, as much as having final clear targets in place, that makes a difference.* In groups we've worked with, the general consensus is that everyone who makes the effort ends up with a much more indepth understanding of what they are trying to accomplish with students.

Types of learning targets. We've seen a million (well, actually maybe a hundred) different ways to categorize the types of learning targets. But, hold on, you're saying, why would one even want to 'categorize' them? Well, this isn't just an outgrowth of compulsiveness on the part of number-crunchers. The process of categorizing helps to do three things. First, it helps folks to thoroughly think through and clarify what they want students to know and be able to do. Second, it helps folks determine if they have a good 'mix' of learning targets. And, finally, it will help folks, later, to choose the appropriate assessment method.

Here is one take on how to categorize learning targets for students. The first thing to remember about a categorization scheme is that it is a convenience made up by someone in order to help people discuss things that are complex. There is no truth out there in the universe that there are five kinds of student learning targets and that every student learning target fits neatly into one of these five types.

Reference Box:

For further reading on types of targets à la Rick Stiggins. see: Rick Stiggins, 1997. *Student Centered Classroom Assessment.* Chapter 3. Prentice-Hall, (201) 236-7000.

Rick Stiggins* finds that classifying student learning targets into five categories helps teachers find a good mix in instruction and assessment. His five types of student learning targets are:

- **Knowledge Mastery**—Knowing and understanding substantive subject matter content, including facts (e.g. "John Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963"), generalizations (e.g. "People holding high political office put their lives in jeopardy"), and concepts (e.g. "political assassinations").

- **Reasoning Proficiency**—The ability to use content understanding to reason and solve problems. Reasoning includes analyzing, comparing, thinking critically, and decisionmaking.

- **Skills**—Reading fluently, working productively in a group, making an oral presentation, speaking a foreign language, or designing an experiment.

- **Ability to Create Products**—Creating tangible products such as an essay, a research report, visual art, or a wood table.

---

* Rick Stiggins, founder of the Assessment Training Institute, has developed over 20 assessment training videos and has written extensively about practical strategies for teachers to use in classroom assessment.

17

- **Dispositions**—Student attitudes, including attitude toward school, civic responsibility, self-confidence, desire to learn, flexibility, and willingness to cooperate.

Caution...

Affective targets can be a red flag in some communities. If so, the user can delete any references to the affective domain in this chapter and stick just to the cognitive domain.

Reflection questions on **Key 1**—*Clear and Appropriate Student Learning Targets*:

1. What are the five most important things you'd like your students to be able to do as the result of your time with them? Do students know this? Is it clear to you and your students how you will know when they achieve these targets?
2. Look at local (state, district, or classroom) content standards (learning targets). Are there any that might need further definition to make them clear? Would all teachers agree on what they mean?
3. Can you identify any learning targets currently assessed that might not be worth the time devoted to them?

Related *Mini-Lessons*

Mini-Lesson #4—*This Too Shall Pass* presents a situation in which teachers are trying to make a decision based on information that is flawed in various ways. One of these flaws is unclear targets. Participants are asked to identify the elements of quality assessment that are missing and give advice on next steps.

Mini-Lesson #6—*What's the Match?* poses a situation to teachers and asks whether the target is clear enough to decide how to assess it.

Mini-Lesson #7—*Do We Know Our Target?* looks at a situation in which teachers are trying to develop an assessment without being clear on the target.

Mini-Lesson #11—*Here Are the Assessment Results. What Do We Do Next?* demonstrates a process for using an existing large-scale assessment to help come to agreement on what the targets mean.

Mini-Lesson #13—*Green Light, Red Flag* provides practice in evaluating the clarity and appropriateness of learning targets. Scoring guides, plus three sample scored assessments are provided in **Appendix B**—*Sample Classroom Assessments*.

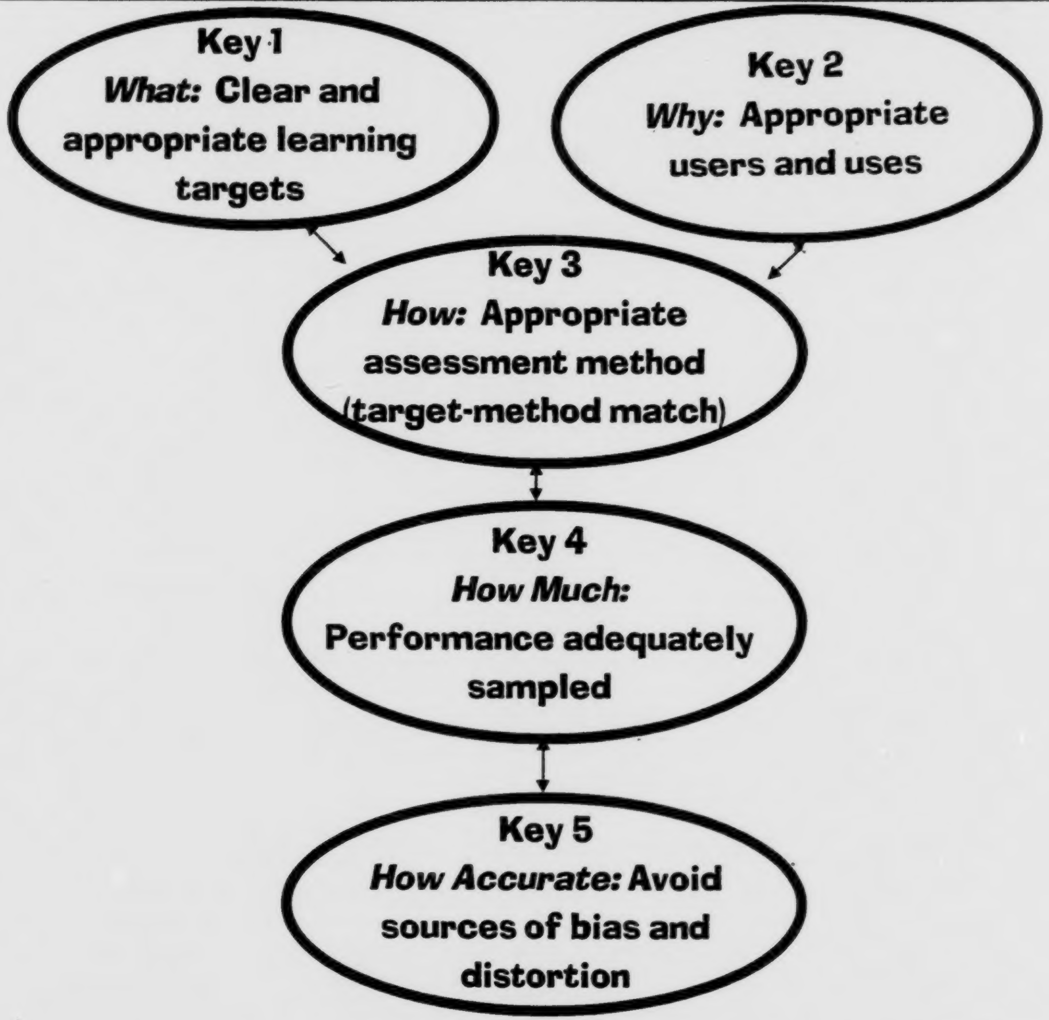
Mini-Lesson #15—*What's Essential*? helps participants clarify their outcomes for students.

Mini-Lesson #17—*Teacher Self-Assessment, The View From the Classroom* asks participants to self-evaluate the clarity of their learning targets using a developmental continuum in **Appendix D**—*Self-Assessment Continuums*.

Mini-Lesson #18—*Hey, These Targets Aren't as Clear as We Thought* asks people to describe what kind of target they are looking at (knowledge, reasoning, etc.). This is an excellent way to begin to tease out differences between educators in their definitions of target statements.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Key 2–*Focused and Appropriate Users and Uses*


Key 1
What: Clear and appropriate learning targets
Key 2
Why: Appropriate users and uses
Key 3
How: Appropriate assessment method (target-method match)
Key 4
How Much: Performance adequately sampled
Key 5
How Accurate: Avoid sources of bias and distortion

This section covers two areas. First, *why* do educators assess? What are our purposes for assessing students? In other words, who are the users of assessment results? This will underscore the importance of doing a good job of assessing students. Then, we'll look at how purpose actually affects the way an assessment is designed.

So, why do folks assess student achievement? Who uses the results, and for what? Well, just about everybody for just about everything, and assessment activity seems to get more intense every day. For example:

- **Teachers** assess students day-to-day in the classroom for such purposes as planning instruction, evaluating what worked and what didn't, grading, promoting student self-control of progress, and communicating with parents.

- **Students** use the results of assessments to decide what they'll study, how much they'll study, whether it's even worth studying, what they're good at (or not), their self-worth, who they might associate with, and how they might earn their living as an adult. Assessment information can also give feedback to students so they can reflect on their performance and make changes. Ultimately, we want students to understand how they learn, evaluate their own performance, and undertake the learning necessary to improve their performance.

- **Parents** use the results of assessments to determine rewards and punishments for their children, decide who will go to college, make judgments of family self-worth, decide whether to vote for a levy, and pick a place to live.

- **Principals and other administrators** use assessment results to promote and graduate students, allocate resources, plan professional development, and report to the public how well the school or district is doing.

- **State departments of education** use assessment results to report to the public, levy rewards and sanctions for districts, and distribute resources.

Looking at this list reminds one that these are pretty important uses for assessment results and that we all had better be sure that our assessments are of good quality. What would happen, for example, if an assessment gave an inaccurate picture of student achievement? What would happen if what was *actually* assessed was not really what was *thought* to be assessed? Or worse yet, what if users were unsure as to what they were assessing, so they didn't know what the results really meant? Is everyone *positive* that they are accurately assessing the most enduring outcomes for students so that the decisions made can really serve to guide learning?

Looking at the list of users and uses also reminds one of the crucial importance of not only large-scale assessments—those that occur in roughly the same way at roughly the same time across classrooms—but also *classroom* assessments. After all, which assessments—day-to-day classroom assessments, or once-a-year large-scale assessment—most affect the kinds of decisions made by teachers, parents, and students? We would choose classroom assessment; hopefully readers did too. What happens if classroom assessments are not well thought-out and executed?

The point here is not to suggest that teachers should be blamed for lapses in their knowledge about classroom assessment. After all, most teachers never had the opportunity to learn about assessment because most states don't even require an assessment class for certification. And, even in places where an assessment course is required, there is an evolving understanding of what teachers really need to know and be able to do to be good classroom assessors.

The point is that student assessment is of crucial importance. That's why there is activity on all fronts to improve it, from clearly defining valued student learning targets at the state level and rethinking how to best assess them in large-scale assessment, to changing coursework for pre-service teachers, to assisting teachers to align important learning targets to instruction and assessment in the classroom. One of the efforts to assist teachers to fine tune classroom assessment practice is this handbook!

⊂ Related *Mini-Lessons*

Mini-Lesson #9—*Sam's Story* asks participants to judge the assessments they'd trust to give good information for a particular purpose—determining proficiency in math for instructional planning. At the end, it asks whether other purposes (for example, whether a student is working up to potential), might require different assessments.

Mini-Lesson #10—*Assessment Principles* asks participants to reflect on the most important purposes for assessment.

Mini-Lesson #13—*Green Light, Red Flag* provides practice in evaluating the clarity and appropriateness of purposes for classroom assessments. Scoring guides, plus three sample scored assessments are provided in **Appendix B**—*Sample Classroom Assessments*.

Mini-Lesson #17—*Teacher Self-Assessment. The View From the Classroom* asks participants to self-evaluate their purposes for assessing students using a developmental continuum in **Appendix D**—*Self Assessment Continuums*.

The second question covered in this section is how does purpose affect how educators assess? It's probably obvious that an assessment good for one purpose is not necessarily best for other purposes. For example, you wouldn't use the same assessment to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the school's overall curriculum and whether most students attained the school's grade-level goals for student performance.

Just consider the differences in uses of information from large-scale and classroom assessments. In general, large-scale purposes require more rigorous evidence of technical quality than do classroom assessments, because important decisions are likely to be based on them and because they usually are done in only a single testing episode. In contrast, for classroom purposes, a teacher has lots of formal and informal evidence upon which to base decisions, and so the results of any single, faulty assessment are not likely to be given undue weight.

As other examples of how purpose can affect assessment design, consider these:

1. A single multiple-choice or short answer multiplication test may be perfectly acceptable to determine whether or not third graders have learned their multiplication facts, but would not be appropriate for making a decision about the overall quality of the third grade mathematics program.

2. A short answer or multiple-choice assessment designed to measure student knowledge of specific scientific principles might be useful for partially determining a student's competence and knowledge. To infer a student's ability to perform scientific tasks requiring an understanding of these principles, however, would require observation of the student applying scientific knowledge in a laboratory setting.

3. Some assessments are used mostly to gather information about students in order to make decisions about them such as grading or certifying competence. Other assessments are designed to involve students in their own assessment and thus serve an instructional function. This distinction between assessment to monitor and assessment to teach has implications for assessment design. For example, rubrics used by teachers to monitor student performance might not need to be as detailed as rubrics used by students to learn and practice the features of writing that make it work.

Reflection questions on **Key 2**—*Clear and Appropriate Users and Uses*:

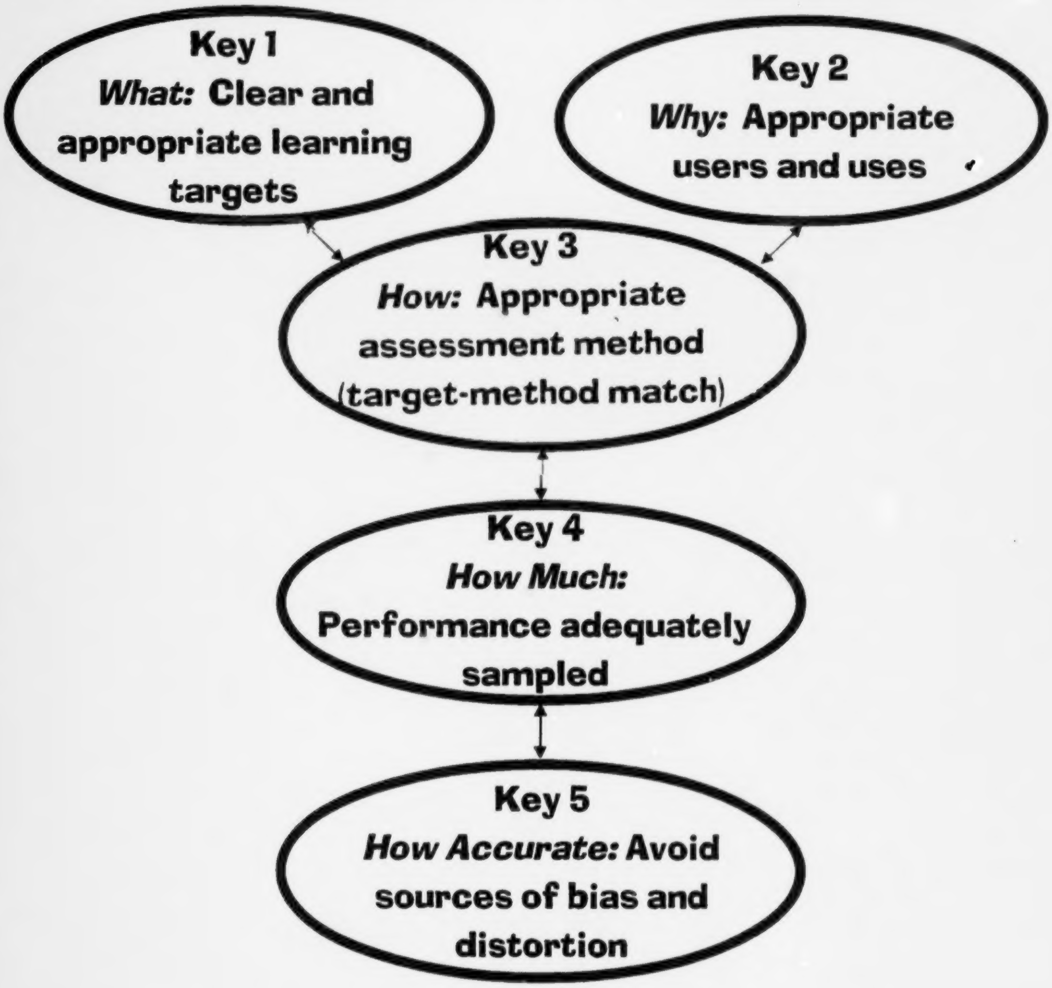
1. What other examples can you think of where the purpose of the assessment affects the assessment design?

2. Why do *you* assess students? Is this the same or different from the purposes of your colleagues? Is there life (assessment) beyond grading?

3. What are the occasions when you engage in assessment activities solely to build student self-assessment skills? How do these occasions differ, if at all, from those in which you're assessing students to find out what they know and can do? What student skills are built through involving students in their own assessment?

4. Have there been occasions when you altered how you presented student achievement results because of the audience? How did you ensure that different audiences could understand and use the results?

Key 3–*Appropriate Methods (Target-Method Match)*


Key 1
What: Clear and appropriate learning targets
Key 2
Why: Appropriate users and uses
Key 3
How: Appropriate assessment method (target-method match)
Key 4
How Much: Performance adequately sampled
Key 5
How Accurate: Avoid sources of bias and distortion

The third Key to Quality Assessment is to match targets and purposes to methods. We are *not* of the opinion that the only good assessment is a performance assessment. Rather, there are times and places for all different forms of assessment including multiple-choice, matching, true/false, essay, performance, portfolios, and oral communication. Good assessment means having a clear idea of what is to be assessed and then picking the best way to assess it.

Rick Stiggins' "target-method-match" ideas are used here. Again, there is no universal truth, for example, that all skills targets should be assessed with a performance assessment. Stiggins' scheme is merely one person's attempt to assist us to order our thinking about assessment topics that are complex. You will be able to think of exceptions to his scheme. This is good! The goal is to have defensible reasons for choosing the methods used.

Stiggins maintains that, although you can assess most types of student learning targets by most methods, there are some more and less efficient ways to do it. For example, if all you want to know is whether students know their multiplication facts, why design performance assessments? **Figure 2** shows his recommendations for matching targets to methods. X's denote a good match; O's denote a partial match.

Figure 2

Aligning Achievement Targets and Assessment Methods

	Selected Response	Essay	Performance Assessment	Personal/Oral Communication
Knowledge Mastery	X	X		O
Reasoning Proficiency	O	X	X	X
Skills			X	X
Products		O	X	X
Dispositions	X	O	O	X

Now, the rationale for the X's and O's: It's simply not efficient to use performance assessment or personal oral communication to assess every *knowledge* outcome educators have for students. For example, using performance assessments to see whether students know all their multiplication facts could take years. But we *could* assess instances of ability to multiply in the context of a problem-solving performance task.

While it is possible to assess some kinds of student *reasoning* skills in, say, multiple-choice format, if we really want to see reasoning in action we need a more complex assessment format. For example, most standardized, norm-referenced tests have questions tapping such student abilities as distinguishing fact versus opinion and identifying what is most likely to happen next. But these are usually assessed out of context as a discrete skill. One would need a performance assessment to see how students can use all their reasoning skills together to address an issue, or to see if they know when, for example, they need to identify an opinion.

Knowledge *about* what it takes to *perform skillfully* or to *produce a product* can be assessed in multiple-choice format, but to actually *see* if a student can *do* it, one needs a performance assessment. For example, one can assess student knowledge about how to give a good oral presentation through an essay, but if one wants to see if students can apply this knowledge, one has to have students *give* an oral presentation.

Selected response questionnaires can tap student *dispositions*, but so can open-ended questions (essays) and personal communication with students.

Reflection questions on **Key 3**—*Matching Methods to Targets and Purposes*:

1. Are there any of these assessment methods that you'd like to know more about before you feel confident in choosing the best method for given targets and uses?
2. Do you agree with Stiggins' matching table? Why or why not?
3. Can you think of specific examples that would fit in each cell of Stiggins' table?
4. Where might you consider changing methods in order to better assess a target? Do you use a good mix of methods? Are there any methods that you use very infrequently? Why?

⊂ Related *Mini-Lessons*

Mini-Lesson #2—*What Do We Want Students To Do?* asks teachers to match up what they say they want students to know and be able to do at the end of instruction to the actual content of their most important graded assignments.

Mini-Lesson #3—*Barrier of Time* presents a situation in which the assessment method is very time consuming. An important first question to ask is whether the target requires the method selected.

Mini-Lesson #4—*This Too Shall Pass* presents a situation in which teachers are trying to make a decision based on information that is flawed in various ways. One of these flaws is poor choice of assessment methods. Participants are asked to identify the elements of quality assessment that are missing and give advice on next steps.

Mini-Lesson #7—*Do We Know Our Target?* examines a situation in which teachers are trying to develop an assessment without being clear on the target. It's hard to choose the most appropriate method if the target isn't clear.

Mini-Lesson #10—*Assessment Principles* asks participants to reflect on issues of matching targets to methods.

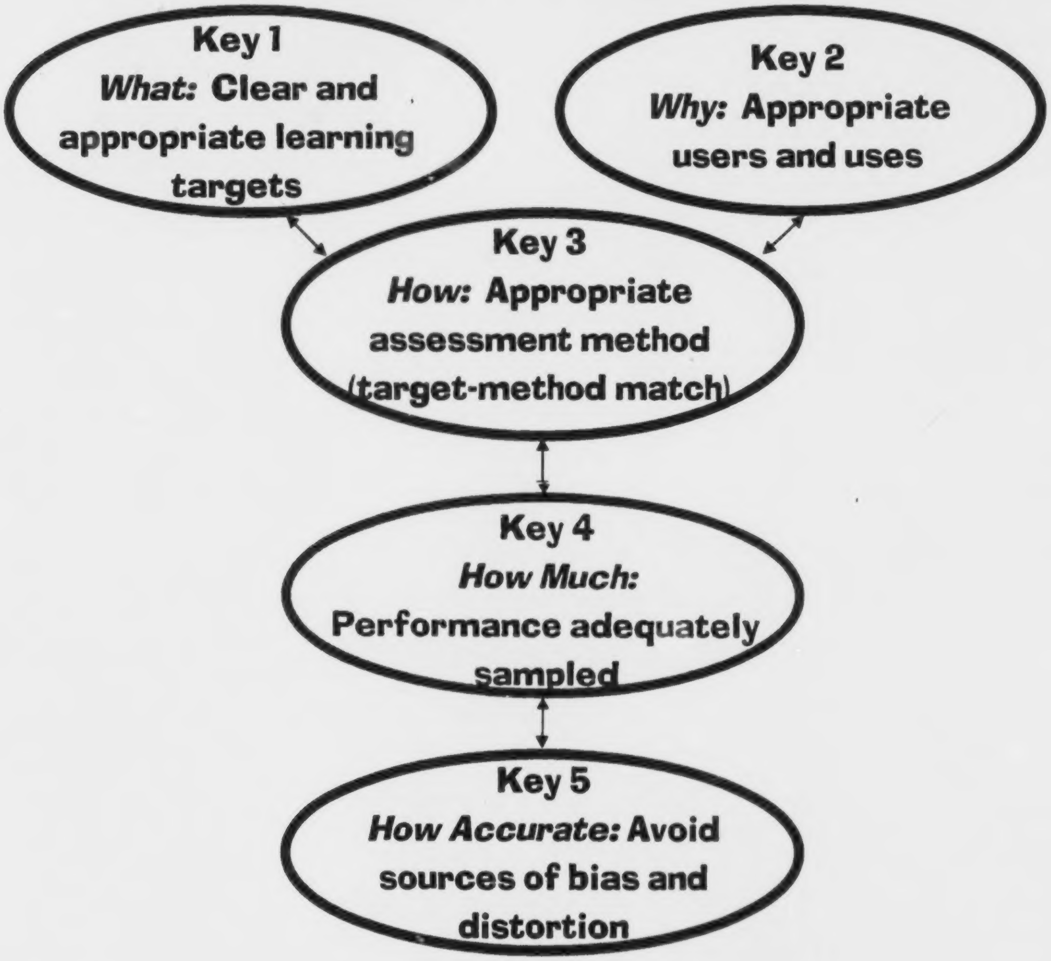
Mini-Lesson #11—*Here are the Assessment Results, What Do We Do Now?* asks participants to consider how the developers of a large-scale assessment matched methods to targets.

Mini-Lesson #13—*Green Light, Red Flag* provides practice in evaluating the reasonableness of methods chosen for specific classroom assessments. Scoring guides, plus three sample scored assessments are provided in **Appendix B**—*Sample Classroom Assessments*.

Mini-Lesson #16—*Changing Assessment Practices* includes a consideration of matching assessment methods to targets and purposes.

Mini-Lesson #17—*Teacher Self-Assessment, The View From the Classroom* asks participants to self-evaluate their confidence in matching methods to targets using a developmental continuum in **Appendix D**—*Self Assessment Continuums*.

Key 4—*Sampling*


Key 1
What: Clear and appropriate learning targets
Key 2
Why: Appropriate users and uses
Key 3
How: Appropriate assessment method (target-method match)
Key 4
How Much: Performance adequately sampled
Key 5
How Accurate: Avoid sources of bias and distortion

How much information about student achievement is enough? Examples are worth a thousand words in this case. So, here are two examples that illustrate the issues involved in sampling.

Example 1—*Certifying Competence in Writing.* The state of Confusion is trying to determine individual student writing proficiency so that it can certify student competence. Its procedure is to administer a multiple-choice test that covers spelling, grammar, usage, and a writing sample that asks students to compare and contrast two pieces of literature. Does this give sufficient evidence of competency to write well?

We, of course, are hoping that you're screaming, "No, no, no!" Confusion's writing assessment doesn't obtain a good representative sample of various types of writing for different audiences and purposes. Also, the particular topic assigned to the student might not invite each student's best effort. And, some students might just not have been at their best that day for whatever reason. To get a good, stable, estimate of ability to write one would need to gather six or so samples of writing for different audiences and purposes. The state of Confusion might want to try a portfolio system.

This example illustrates the need to adequately sample from the complete range of the skills and knowledge a target implies. It also illustrates the need to collect enough samples that one obtains a stable estimate of student performance.

Example 2—*Impressing the School Board.* So, the school board in Elbow Bend District wants to see how well students are learning health. Right now there is no mandated time-per-day requirement for teaching health and the school board is considering whether they need to institute such a policy. To keep teacher anxiety levels down, district staff decide to ask selected teachers in each school to provide samples of student work that illustrate how much students know about health.

The result? They got the best examples from the best students in the classes of the best teachers. They did not answer the question, "What is the *typical* student learning in health?" Rather, their sampling procedure led them to answer the question, 'What are the *best* students in the *best* classes learning about health?' It's okay to answer the latter question, it's just not okay to say that one has answered the former question when they collected information in the latter manner.

The point of this example is that the sampling procedure has to match the question to be answered. Best work? Typical work? And for whom—*all* fourth graders as a *group* or *individual students*? Each of these questions implies a different sampling plan.

Related *Mini-Lessons*

Mini-Lesson #4—*This Too Shall Pass* presents a situation in which teachers are trying to make a decision based on information that is flawed in various ways. One of these flaws is poor sampling—they present only their observations of a few individual students. Participants are asked to identify the elements of quality assessment that are missing and give advice on next steps.

Mini-Lesson #9—*Sam's Story* illustrates the need for multiple measures of student performance so that achievement is adequately sampled.

Mini-Lesson #13—*Green Light, Red Flag* provides practice in evaluating how well specific classroom assessments sample student achievement. Scoring guides, plus three sample scored assessments are provided in **Appendix B**—*Sample Classroom Assessments*.

Mini-Lesson #17—*Teacher Self-Assessment, The View From the Classroom* asks participants to self-evaluate their confidence in sampling using a developmental continuum in **Appendix D**—*Self Assessment Continuums*.

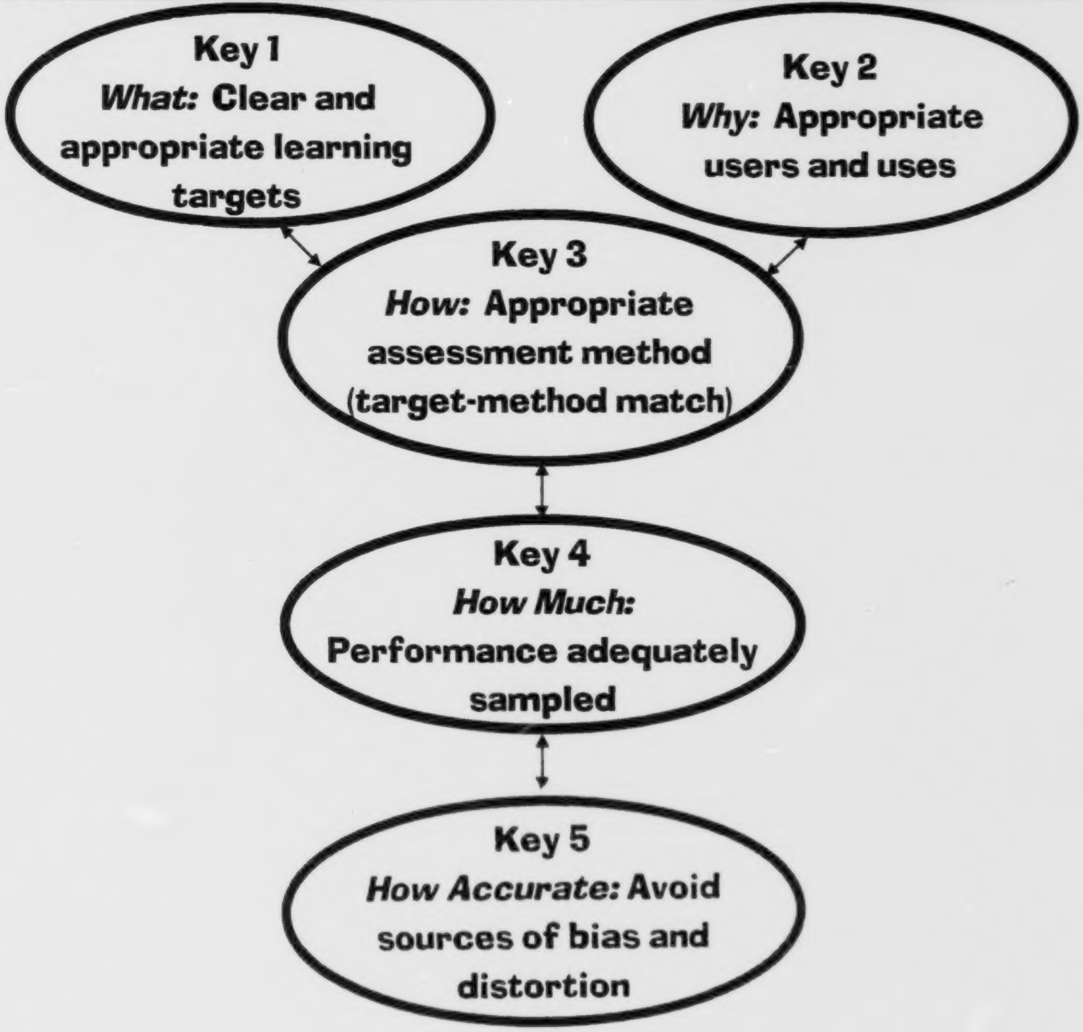
Reflection questions on **Key 4**—*Sampling*.

1. Can you remember any time that you felt uncomfortable because a decision was made based on too little data?

2. Pick a student learning target, such as "reads with comprehension." Develop a plan for assessment that would provide adequate information upon which to decide when this occurs. What is the breadth and depth of the range of this target? What types of reading? What types of responses? How many samples?

3. Have you ever had the feeling that you're collecting too much information—that less would be more? (In other words, you've over-sampled!) Describe when and why.

Key 5–*Eliminating Potential Sources of Bias & Distortion*

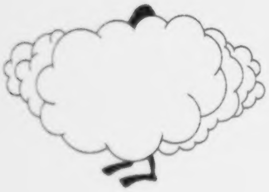

Key 1
What: Clear and appropriate learning targets
Key 2
Why: Appropriate users and uses
Key 3
How: Appropriate assessment method (target-method match)
Key 4
How Much: Performance adequately sampled
Key 5
How Accurate: Avoid sources of bias and distortion

Assume that targets are perfectly clear and appropriate, purposes have universal agreement, the absolutely best way to assess each target has been picked, and you've planned for an adequate sample of performance. Is this all? Unfortunately, no. It's still possible, even easy, to execute the plan poorly.

In short, things can go wrong in assessment. Have you ever tried to engage students in an instructional activity and not gotten at all what you expected to? The instructions weren't clear, or there wasn't enough time, or students didn't have all the prerequisite skills, or the activity didn't allow students with different learning styles to do their best.

Well, the same thing can happen in assessment. These "things that go wrong" are called sources of mismeasurement, bias and distortion, or invalidity. The result is that the information from the assessment doesn't mean what we think it means.

What happens if the ability to read the instructions interferes with a student's ability to demonstrate math skills? Or, the necessity to write a response interferes with how well a student can demonstrate ability to set up a scientific experiment? Then these assessments could really measure reading or writing rather than math or science—these are serious potential sources of bias and distortion.



If these assessments then form the basis for a grade or for certifying competence on a state graduation test, the result would be unfortunate. A grade or certification of competence is only as good as the assessment upon which it is based.

This, then, is the fifth Key to Quality—attending to what might go wrong and fixing it. You've seen the lists of what can go wrong. But, for the sake of completeness, see **Figure 3.**

Related *Mini-Lessons*

Mini-Lesson #3—*Barrier of Time* asks participants to identify potential sources of bias and distortion in an assessment.

Mini-Lesson #6—*What's The Match?* looks at the bias that can occur in assessment results if the criteria for judging the quality of student performance are incomplete.

Mini-Lesson #7—*Do We Know Our Target?* describes the bias and distortion in a planned assessment by a group of elementary school teachers.

Mini-Lesson #9—*Sam's Story* describes the most valid pieces of information for a particular assessment purpose.

Mini-Lesson #10—*Assessment Principles* looks at equity issues in assessment.

Mini-Lesson #13—*Green Light, Red Flag* provides practice in analyzing potential sources of bias and distortion in specific classroom assessments. Scoring guides, plus three sample scored assessments are provided in **Appendix B**—*Sample Classroom Assessments*.

Mini-Lesson #16—*Changing Assessment Practices* explains the rationale for changes in assessment, including the need to eliminate bias and distortion.

Mini-Lesson #17—*Teacher Self-Assessment, The View From the Classroom* asks participants to self-evaluate their confidence in eliminating potential sources of bias and distortion using a developmental continuum in **Appendix D**—*Self Assessment Continuums*.

Figure 3

Possible Sources of Bias and Distortion in Student Assessments*

Sources due to the assessment itself	• Too much reading or writing on an assessment designed to assess something besides reading or writing • Unnecessarily difficult or unfamiliar vocabulary used in instructions • An assessment method that doesn't allow students with different learning styles to do their best • Unclear instructions • Attempts to make a problem more "real-life" that results in a context more familiar to some groups of students than others • Performance assessments: rater bias; untrained raters; performance criteria that don't cover the most important aspects of performance; performance criteria that are vague; required materials that don't work; tasks that don't really elicit the skill to be assessed • Multiple-choice tests: irrelevant clues to the right answer; more than one right answer; unnecessarily convoluted questions
Sources due to the student	• Student is not rested, is hungry, is sick, or is distracted for some other reason • Student is not used to the format, timing, or other logistics of the testing situation
Sources due to the environment	• Noisy or distracting environment • Assessment administrator that projects a negative attitude toward the assessment • Assessment not given as instructed • Teacher assistance with the assessment

*A sampling

Reflection questions on **Key 5**—*Eliminating Potential Sources of Bias and Distortion*:

1. Did you ever take an assessment you felt didn't really show what you knew or could do? What was it about the assessment that interfered with your ability to shine?

2. Have you ever had a student where you felt that the assessment didn't adequately reflect what he or she knew or could do? What was it about the assessment that interfered with the student's ability to shine?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Assessment *Mini-Lesson* Reference Guide

Mini-Lesson	**Purpose**	**Focus: Keys**	**Focus: Large-Scale or Classroom**	**Time Min.**
Beginning *Mini-Lessons*—for those just starting out				
#10: Assessment Principles	Examines beliefs that influence assessment decisions. Provides an introduction to the Five Keys.	Keys 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Large-scale and classroom	30-45
#16: Changing Assessment Practices	Prompts reflection about current practices and why changes in assessment are occurring. Provides an introduction to the Five Keys.	Keys 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Classroom	45-75
#18: Hey, These Targets Aren't As Clear As We Thought	Assists understanding of types of learning targets for students, local content standards, what unclear targets look like, and why we should care.	Key 1	Large-scale and classroom	40-60
#15: What's Essential?	Familiarizes teachers with local content standards.	Key 1	Classroom	45-60
Intermediate *Mini-Lessons*				
#2: What Do We Want Students to Do?	Promotes alignment between achievement targets for students, instruction, and assessment.	Keys 1, 3	Classroom	60-90
#11: Here are the State Results...What Do We Do Next?	Assists faculties to interpret and use the score reports from local large-scale assessments.	Keys 1, 2, 3	Large-scale alignment to instruction	90
#3: Barrier of Time	Applies knowledge of the Five Keys to solve an assessment dilemma.	Keys 1, 3, 4, 5	Classroom assessment; uses local content standards	45-60

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Assessment *Mini-Lesson* Reference Guide

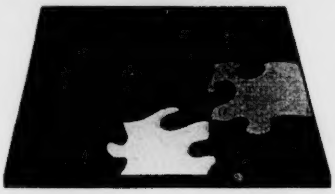
Mini-Lesson	**Purpose**	**Focus: Keys**	**Focus: Large-Scale or Classroom**	**Time Min.**
Intermediate *Mini-Lessons*—continued				
#9: Sam's Story	Demonstrates the need for multiple measures of student achievement.	Keys 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Classroom	30-45
#14: Grading—The Issue Is Not How But Why	Kicks off conversations about grading.	Keys 2, 3, 5	Classroom	30-45
#12: Working Backwards—From Report Card to Teaching	Encourages reflection on alignment between grading, assessment, targets, and teaching.	Keys 1, 3	Classroom; uses local content standards	45-60
#5: Connecting Assessment With Reporting	Illustrates the connection between assessment, instruction, and meaningful reporting of student achievement.	Keys 1, 2, 3, 4	Classroom	30-45
#6: What's the Match?	Looks at what is worth assessing, how to assess it, and designing performance assessments with quality.	Keys 1, 3, 5	Classroom	30-45
#7: Do We Know Our Target?	Applies knowledge of the Five Keys to solve an assessment dilemma.	Keys 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Classroom	30
#8: A Success Story	Applies knowledge of the Five Keys to analyze an assessment situation.	Keys 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Classroom	20-30

Assessment *Mini-Lesson* Reference Guide

Mini-Lesson	**Purpose**	**Focus: Keys**	**Focus: Large-Scale or Classroom**	**Time Min.**
Advanced *Mini-Lessons*				
#1: Quality Assessment Jigsaw	To consolidate knowledge of the Five Keys to Quality Assessment.	Keys 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Large-scale and classroom	90
#13: Green Light/Red Flag	Gives teachers and principals a tool to evaluate the quality of classroom assessments, and practice doing so.	Keys 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Classroom	Varies
#17: Teacher Self-Assessment, View From the Classroom	Models self-assessment by providing teachers with developmental continuums with which to evaluate their own progress as student assessors.	Keys 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Classroom	15-20

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Mini-Lesson #1—
Quality Assessment Jigsaw



Purpose

To help educators understand the difference between sound and unsound classroom assessment practices; to overview the Five Keys to Quality Assessment.

Rationale

As learners we all need a conceptual framework on which to hang new learning as well as specific connections to what we know already. This activity is designed to provide this framework and these connections.

> Note from Bill Nutting: *I have participated in this process with our District's principal group and with our District's Assessment Team. It provided common vocabulary and starting points for other assessment conversations.*

Prerequisites

This should not be the first *Mini-Lesson*. Prerequisites would be activities that motivate teachers to *want* to know more about the characteristics of quality assessment and why they should care. Any of the following activities would better serve to generate such an interest. *Mini-Lesson #1* should occur in the middle or toward the end of assessment study to provide a conceptual framework for some of the experiences teachers already have had.

Possible prerequisites:

- **Mini-Lesson #2**—*What Do We Want Students to Do?*
- **Mini-Lesson #10**—*Assessment Principles*
- **Mini-Lesson #11**—*Here Are The Assessment Results…What Do We Do Next?*
- **Mini-Lesson #12**—*Report Cards: Working Backwards*
- **Mini-Lesson #14**—*Grading: The Issue Is Not How But Why*
- **Mini-Lesson #16**—*Changing Assessing Practices*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Time

If done as a jigsaw: 90 minutes
If done as a whole group activity: five 60 minute sessions

Focus

An overview of Five Keys to Quality Assessment

Materials

***Handouts*:**

- *Mini-Lesson* **Introduction**, pages 4-24—Keys to Quality Student Assessment. Pages 4-6 are a general overview. Pages 7-11 relate to Key 1. Pages 12-15 discuss Key 2. Pages 16-18 cover Key 3. Pages 19-21 target Key 4. Pages 22-24 hit Key 5.

Overheads:

- Five Keys to Quality Assessment overhead (**Appendix A**).

Facilitator's Outline

A. Jigsaw Method

The goal of a jigsaw is to review and discuss written material in as efficient a manner as possible by dividing it up. Use this method if your teachers are already knowledgeable about Five Keys to Quality Assessment and you want to provide some review.

1. Divide participants into five groups. Each group will become the expert on a single key. Copy off the pages in the introduction specific to each key. Give the groups 30 minutes to read the three-five pages they are given and discuss the questions posed at the end of each section. They should come to agreement on:

   - What the key means
   - Why the key is important
   - Specific examples that illustrate the meaning and/or importance of the key

   Answering the discussion questions at the end of each section will assist in this process. Groups should write or draw their answers and conclusions on a piece of chart paper and post it.

2. Reorganize the participants so that an expert for each key are together. Each expert has five minutes to describe to the others what their key means, why it is important, and specific examples that illustrate the meaning and/or importance of the key. Groups will

circulate to the five chart pages on the walls. So, when a group is at the Key 2 chart paper, for example, the expert on Key 2 has the floor.

3. Reconvene the whole group. Discuss what might be added to each chart paper page. Ask each participant to decide on one thing they'd like to try and write it in their learning journal.

B. Whole Group Method

Use this method if participants are new learners about assessment quality. This will take five staff meetings. At each staff meeting tackle a separate key as a group.

1. At the first meeting pass out pages 4-11 of the *Mini-Lesson* **Introduction**. Provide a quick overview of the Five Keys to Quality Assessment using the bubble overhead from **Appendix A** and pages 4-6 of the **Introduction**.
2. Then ask participants to read pages 7-11 of the **Introduction** and break into small groups to discuss the questions at the end of the chapter.
3. Finally, reconvene and discuss the questions as a whole group.
4. Ask each teacher to decide on one thing to try and be ready to discuss it at the next meeting.
5. At subsequent meetings provide 30 minutes for teachers to describe to each other what they tried from the previous session. Use the bubble overhead from **Appendix A** to orient teachers to the next key. Then read and discuss the pages for the next key. Teachers can write about what they are learning in their learning journal.

Mini-Lesson #2—
What Do We Want Students to Do?[1]

Purpose

To promote alignment between achievement targets for students, instruction, and assessment. To consciously link major outcomes for students to the assessments and assignments that are the primary measures of student achievement.

Rationale

Ideally, teachers should think about instruction from the perspective of outcomes rather than activities. Educators should begin with what students should know and be able to do at the end of instruction. Then instructional activities and assessments can be developed to get students there and determine when they've made it.

> Note from Bill Nutting: *We have had several of these conversations, usually as we are contemplating report card changes. This causes teachers to reconsider clear targets and assessment practices, which leads to reconsidering teaching practices. We have found this kind of practical, hands-on work to be very powerful both in creating better assessments and in promoting professional growth for our teachers.*

Prerequisites

This is a good activity early on in assessment study. Prerequisites might be an overview of the Five Keys to Quality Assessment and a chance to think about one's own assessment practices and why there is attention on assessment right now (**Mini-Lesson #10—** *Assessment Principles* or **Mini-Lesson #16—***Changing Assessment Practices*).

Time

Initial activity: 60-90 minutes. Follow-up activities: as many as it takes.

Focus

Key 1: What: Clear and appropriate targets. Teachers identify the major outcomes they'd like their students to attain.

Key 3: How: Target-method match. To check alignment, teachers match major graded assignments and assessments to learning targets.

---

[1] Adapted from an idea appearing in: Barbara E. Walvoord and Virginia Anderson, *An Assessment Riddle*, Assessment Update, November-December 1995, Vol. 7, No. 6, pp. 8, 9, 11.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Materials

Teachers should bring copies of major assignments and assessments from a course or subject area in which they'd like to improve instruction.

Overhead: Five Keys to Quality Assessment (**Appendix A**)

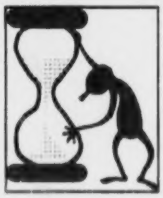
Facilitator's Outline

Introduction:

"All teachers have a content area or course in which they'd like to improve instruction and student achievement. One way to do this is to examine the match between desired student learning targets, the assignments and assessments that measure student achievement, and instruction. That's the goal of today's session, and perhaps several future sessions."

1. (5 minutes) Optional. Put up the Five Keys to Quality Assessment bubble overhead from **Appendix A**. Briefly review the nature of quality assessment by briefly describing the five bubbles. Indicate that this activity focuses on Keys 1 and 3.
2. (5 minutes) Ask each teacher to select a course or a subject area in which they want to improve instruction.
3. (5-10 minutes) Ask each teacher to write an answer to the question, "What do I want students to do at the end of instruction that they can't do at the beginning of instruction?"
4. (5-10 minutes) Ask each teacher to list the main graded assignments or assessments they use in this course or subject to determine student progress or success. It would be best if the teachers could bring these assignments and assessments to the meeting.
5. (30 minutes) Ask teachers to match the content of their main graded assignments and assessments to their list of important targets. What is being assessed and taught well? Where are there gaps? (Although teachers frequently list higher-order thinking skills as important outcomes, they often have lessons, assignments, and assessments that don't align well.)
6. (10-15 minutes) For assignments and assessments that are graded by teacher judgment of quality, ask teachers to list the criteria they use in making those judgments. Ask teachers to review these criteria to see whether they capture the essence of their targets. This will probably take longer than a single staff meeting. A good homework assignment would be to look for criteria from others that attempt to measure the targets.
7. (10-15 minutes) Ask teachers to discuss how they can best help students learn what they will need if they are to do well on the assignments or assessments that measure what is to be learned. What is the role of their criteria in this process? This, again, is a teaser that might need to be followed up in subsequent sessions. Teachers might write their thoughts in their learning journals.

Mini-Lesson #3—
Barrier of Time[1]



Purpose

This reading assessment scenario helps participants consider alternative assessment methods to accomplish what is needed within the time available. It also clearly points out that when the target of assessment and instruction is clear, decisions about how to assess become much easier.

Rationale

Case studies are a good real-life way of engaging teachers in assessment topics.

Prerequisites

It is helpful to have had exposure to a variety of assessment methods and an understanding of target-method match. This might be good for middle of assessment study.

Time 45-60 minutes

Focus

Key 1: What: Articulating clear and appropriate achievement targets. Having clear targets makes other assessment decisions easier.

Key 3: How: Matching method to targets. Participants need to decide if the procedure selected by the teachers in the case study is the best way to assess the target.

Key 4:
Key 5: How Much and How Accurate: Sampling and eliminating possible sources of bias and distortion. Participants analyze assessment plans for quality, inadequate sample of performance, and making sure assessments really measure what is intended.

---

[1] Adapted from *Making Connections Case Studies*, Case Study 5.1, Kathleen Busick and Rick Stiggins, 1997, Portland, OR: Assessment Training Institute.

Materials

Handouts:

- Case Study 5.1 from *Making Connections* by Kathleen Busick and Rick Stiggins (attached)
- Local content standards in reading (or the sample reading content standards in **Appendix A**).

Overheads:

- Discussion Questions (attached)
- Five Keys to Quality Assessment (**Appendix A**)

Facilitator's Outline

Introduction

"One of the barriers teachers have to deal with in assessment is time. Sometimes the time barrier is solved by being clear about what we want to assess and picking the most efficient way to assess it." Refer to the Five Keys to Quality Assessment overhead (**Appendix A**) to orient participants that they will be working on Keys 1, 3, 4, and 5.

1. (5 minutes) Ask teachers to read Case Study 5.1 (attached).

2. (10 minutes) In small groups, ask teachers to respond to the initial reflection question.

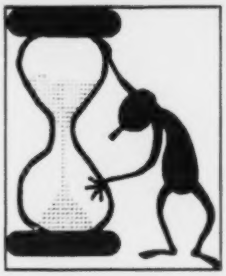
3. (20-30 minutes) Discuss (see attached overhead):

    - What is it that the teachers want to assess? Is "construct meaning" clearly defined? Might local content standards (or the sample content standards in **Appendix A**) help clear up what it means to construct meaning? What other sources might help clarify what we mean by constructing meaning?
    - Does the assessment procedure described in the case study really get at these skills? Why or why not? (Consider method, sampling, and possible sources of bias and distortion.)
    - Are there better ways to assess constructing meaning?
    - If, in fact, the method described *is* the best way to assess the desired skills, what are some creative solutions to the dilemma of limited time for one-on-one assessment methods?

4. (10 minutes) Ask teachers to write in their learning journal one or two things they want to remember from this activity.

Barrier of Time

Discussion Questions



- What is it that the teachers want to assess? Is "constructing meaning" defined clearly enough to develop a good assessment?

- Does the assessment procedure described in the case study really get at these skills? Why or why not?

- Are there other ways to assess "constructing meaning?"

- If the method described does, in fact, best assess these skills, what are some creative solutions to the dilemma of limited time for one-on-one assessment methods?

Overhead

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

5.1 WHEN CAN I GO TO THE BATHROOM? THE BARRIER OF TIME

This case returns us to the student-centered school found in Chapter 2, Case 2.1, The Dilemma of Differing Assessment Purposes, and Chapter 3, Case 3.2, What in the World Is Creative Problem Solving? The context for this case will be clearer as you take a look back at your notes and reflections.

To demonstrate that the assessment system currently under development can provide school-level information, teachers at a student-centered elementary school agreed to conduct and summarize reading interviews. They sampled students across grade levels and used the initial results to polish and refine their interview questions. Students were selected to represent a spread of performance, and teachers began to schedule the interviews.

One section of the interview focuses on student's ability to "construct meaning." These were the questions asked:[1]

- Tell me about the book you have selected for this conference.
- Why do you think the author wrote this book?
- Would you recommend this book? Why or why not?

Additional sections of the interview protocol invite students to demonstrate wide reading through their book lists, silent/oral reading, and use of reading strategies, attitudes toward reading, and self-assessment. The final section of the interview sheet provides space for notes about next steps and adjustments to instruction.

After their initial interviews, teachers met to discuss their experiences.

One said, "I don't know how anyone can do these new assessments and still have time to teach. I only had five students to interview, but it took me more than 90 minutes to do the first one. If I hadn't had a student teacher in my room, I couldn't have done it."

Another teacher chimed in: "I really learned a lot about my students when we got going on the interviews, and I'd like to do this with all of them. But I started to wonder, how could I ever find the time to conduct interviews with 28 students?"

A third grade teacher who had conducted interviews earlier in the year to probe students' problem solving commented: "This reading assessment was different. At least they had a book to talk about. When I tried to interview a few of my students about their everyday problem solving, it took more than a half hour of prompting on my part for a student even to remember the details of the unit, and I found myself telling them things about the activities to help them remember. The completed interviews took more than 90 minutes each. These reading interviews were a little shorter, but still, how do I keep all of my students going while I'm doing interviews?"

Kathleen Busick and Rick Stiggins, *Making Connections—Case Studies for Student-Centered Classroom Assessment, Second Edition,* 1997, Chapter 5, pp. 35-36. Article excerpt reprinted with permission from authors.

Handout, p. 1

Someone suggested using parent volunteers or university college of education "observation" students to conduct the interviews. The third grade teacher replied, "But I'm the one who needs to get the insights into my individual students so I can adjust my teaching. If I let someone else do the interviews, they might not look for or see the things that will trigger action on my part. They just don't know my students the way I do. I thought that was one of the main reasons for our using multiple forms of assessment—to gain really useful and complex portraits of our students' learning so we can make good instructional decisions."

As their reflection session came to an end, "When will I ever have time to go to the bathroom?" was the comic but very real parting question.

Initial Reflections

1. Obviously, time is the issue here. Why has it emerged so strongly in this case? Be specific. What's going wrong?

Discussion Starters

1. How would you advise this group? Should everyone continue using the reading interview? Why?
2. What are some practical ways of dealing with the time issue?
3. Are there other assessment alternatives? What are the pluses and minuses of each?

Handout, p. 2

Mini-Lesson #4—This Too Shall Pass[1]

Purpose

This activity highlights educators' need to have solid evidence of student learning for various uses and users.

Rationale

Case studies are a good, real-life way to engage teachers in the study of assessment issues.

Prerequisites

It is useful for teachers to know the Five Keys to Quality Assessment. This activity is best for use later in assessment study; it is a middle-difficulty activity.

Time 30-45 minutes

Focus

Key 1: What: Clear and appropriate targets. The teachers in the scenario can't really decide on what evidence is best to document student achievement until they specify what student achievement is to be documented.

Key 2: Who: Clear and appropriate users and uses. Why do the teachers in the scenario assess? To grade? To improve instruction? To report to the public? Do the teachers differ in their purposes? Might this be one of the sources of confusion?

Key 3: How: Target-method match. Appropriate methods will be determined by what is to be assessed.

Key 4: How Much: Sampling. Each teacher is looking at a different, and highly restricted, sample of student performance. To get a real answer to the question posed, sampling has to be much better.

---

[1] Adapted from *Making Connections Case Studies* by Kathleen Busick and Rick Stiggins, 1997, Portland, OR: Assessment Training Institute.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Key 5: How Accurate: Eliminating possible sources of bias and distortion. Each method discussed has possible sources of bias and distortion. How should the teachers eliminate these to get better data?

Materials

Handout:

- Case Study 5.3 from *Making Connections* (attached)

Overheads:

- Five Keys to Quality Assessment (**Appendix A**)
- Discussion Questions (attached)

Facilitator's Outline

Introduction:

"The side conversations during the staff meeting in this scenario show varying opinions regarding the need to reform assessment. The staff involved have different perspectives on the purpose of assessment and what evidence proves their case. We'll discuss the reasons for these differing opinions and how knowledge of the Five Keys to Quality Assessment (**Appendix A**) can help resolve the issues."

1. (5 minutes) Ask teachers to read Case Study 5.3.

2. (15-20 minutes) Ask teachers to discuss the following questions (see the attached overhead):

    - What evidence of student learning is described in this example?
    - How solid and useful do you think this evidence is? What elements of the Keys to Quality Assessment appear to be missing? Answer: clear targets, sampling, target-method match, possible sources of bias and distortion.
    - Which uses and users of assessment information are being included in this conversation? Which are being left out?
    - What steps would you advise this group to take next?

3. (10-20 minutes) Discuss how this example might inform assessment practices in your classrooms? Your school? Your district? Ask teachers to write in their learning journal two things they'd like to remember.

This Too Shall Pass

Discussion Questions

- What evidence of student learning is described in this example?
- How solid and useful do you think this evidence is? What elements of the Keys to Quality Assessment appear to be missing?
- Which uses and users of assessment information are being included in this conversation? Which are being left out?
- What steps would you advise this group to take next?
- How does this example inform assessment practices in your classroom? Your school? Your district?

Overhead

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

5.3 "THIS TOO SHALL PASS." THE TEACHER WHO IS SET IN HIS WAYS

The staff meeting began 15 minutes late as usual—what with the gathering of busy faculty and the time allowed for refreshments. Just a few minutes to talk with colleagues is a small but important luxury, especially after a long summer apart. Everyone at the high school has so much to catch up on.

Finally, the principal begins with the usual kinds of notes and directives from the district office covering the issues addressed at the school board meeting a few days ago: bus transportation, the upcoming bond issue, the need to adjust to smaller budgets.

Then the meeting turns to the topic of priorities in the district's strategic plan. This year, topic number one is assessment. A district-wide committee has been appointed by the superintendent to review assessment procedures and recommend changes to the school board. Because assessment reforms seem to be sweeping the nation, this district needs to find out what's going on and get on the band wagon. The principal doesn't seem to have a clear sense of what to do or to expect here, so she simply asks that the faculty participate in whatever planning, assessment, or professional development activities come up.

A social studies teacher in the back of the room asks, "Why does the superintendent think anything needs to change from an assessment perspective? It seems as though everything has been going pretty well. We had two national merit scholars last year. We have more kids taking advanced placement exams in history than ever before, and they're scoring very well. Average college admissions test scores are higher than ever. If I were in charge, I don't think I would want to change anything. I don't want people looking over my shoulder when I assess. We don't need any strategic plan priority on assessment."

A colleague from the math department chimes in, "Yeah, but what percent of our graduates go on to college—about 40 percent. And that's great, but what about the rest? How are they doing? I was collared the other day by the owner of a local restaurant who knows I'm a math teacher. She asked if we ever taught the kids anything out at that brand new $25 million high school. 'Sure,' I said, 'why?' She showed me an example of some simple math one of our recent graduates screwed up. Then she laughed and told me there had been some frustrated talk about this at Rotary last week. I checked and this kid graduated with a GPA of 2.85, 45th in a class of 195—not too bad!"

Kathleen Busick and Rick Stiggins, *Making Connections—Case Studies for Student-Centered Classroom Assessment, Second Edition,* 1997, Chapter 5, pp. 38-40. Article excerpt reprinted with permission from authors.

Handout, p. 1

Back to the social studies teacher, "Look, my students are succeeding. I had a letter just the other day from an old friend who's a professor at the university telling me how pleased she was with one of our graduates. If your students are failing the test of real life, you deal with it. Don't ask me to take responsibility for it or to change everything. I'm doing the job I was hired to do."

At this point the principal steps in: "We've got conflicting impressions, both here at school and in the community. It seems as though the assessment picture isn't really clear within the school. We need to check the accuracy of the perceptions about our students' performance and then make some decisions. One of the reasons the superintendent wants us to look more closely at assessment is facing us right now. What solid evidence do we have about student learning? How does it jibe with the conflicting impressions we've heard? Are both perspectives accurate? Is there a difference in performance by subject? If so, we need to consider how we'll communicate to the whole community what our students' strengths and needs are and what actions we're going to take to address the needs. We have to think in terms of solid evidence and help the community view student performance in the same way."

One teacher suggests that it might be useful to conduct a community survey of graduates. Another recommends surveying local businesses. But the teacher who opened up the discussion by citing how well his students were doing is still adamant: "My kids are doing fine. I teach Social Studies and I'm tough. If students don't want to work hard in my class, then they don't sign up for my electives. If there are problems in the math department, leave me out of it."

Each teacher cites different evidence of the effectiveness of his or her teaching. Their views of the school's public relations differ fundamentally. One teacher sees very positive regard from the community, while another sees just the opposite—a public relations nightmare in the making. Both are citing compelling assessment evidence that they're right.

Handout, p. 2

Mini-Lesson #5—
Connecting Assessment With Reporting

Purpose

To illustrate the connection between assessment, instruction, and meaningful reporting of student achievement.

Rationale

Case studies provide a real-life way for teachers to become engaged in assessment topics.

Prerequisites

It is useful for teachers to know the Five Keys to Quality Assessment. This activity is best for use later in assessment study; it is a middle-difficulty activity.

Time

30-45 minutes

Focus

Key 1: What: Clear and appropriate targets. The teachers in the scenario could only really revise their report card when they had a much clearer idea of what they wanted to accomplish with their students. The assessment method helped them to clarify their learning targets for students. This in turn led them to want to report more fully what students knew and could do.

Key 2: Who: Clear and appropriate users and uses. The assessment method was developed for one purpose: teaching and learning. The report card was developed for another purpose: reporting achievement to parents. These users and uses needed to be resolved. This resolution was only possible once the targets were clarified and an appropriate assessment method was chosen.

Key 3: How: Target-method match. Reporting is only as good as the assessment that underlies it.

Key 4: How Much: Sampling. The teachers ended up with many ways to show progress to parents: report card marks, collections of student work, classroom assessments, the districtwide assessment, and teacher descriptions. This sampled the domain better, and gave a more well-rounded picture of student achievement.

Materials

Handouts:

- Attached case study (*Connecting Assessment With Reporting*)
- Attached assessment used by the teachers to measure primary writing improvement
- Attached report card, as revised by teachers

Overheads:

- Five Keys to Quality Assessment (**Appendix A**)
- Discussion Questions (attached)

Facilitator's Outline

Introduction:

"Many times teachers feel that their required report card does not adequately reflect what students know and can do, but the exact reasons and what to do about it are often elusive. Beginning with the report card itself is usually not the best way to proceed. This case study illustrates a more productive approach to report card reform." Use the Five Keys to Quality Assessment overhead (**Appendix A**) as needed to orient teachers to the areas of quality assessment they will be examining.

1. (5 minutes) Ask teachers to read the attached case study (see Handouts). The assessment model and revised report card are attached for reference (see Handouts).

2. (20-30 minutes) Ask teachers to discuss the following questions (see the attached overhead):

   - What is the relationship between clear targets and good report card design? How was this relationship illustrated in this scenario? One can't change a report card until it is clear what student learning targets are to be reported. The new assessment method helped teachers to clarify their targets, thereby highlighting what was left off the report card.

   - What is the relationship between sound assessment and good report card design? How was this relationship illustrated in this scenario? A report card statement is only as good as the assessments that underlie it—good target-method match, sound sampling and eliminating potential sources of bias and distortion.

   - What barriers in our building are keeping us from attaining a higher level of consistency among teaching, learning, assessing, and reporting? What could be done about it?

3. (5-10 minutes) Come up with next steps. Either:

   - Ask teachers to write three things they'd like to remember in their learning journal, or

   - Schedule additional meetings to make further plans.

Connecting Assessment With Reporting Discussion Questions

- What is the relationship between clear targets and good report card design? How was this relationship illustrated in this scenario?

- What is the relationship between sound assessment and good report card design? How was this relationship illustrated in this scenario?

- What barriers might be prohibiting teachers in our building from attaining a higher level of consistency among teaching, learning, assessing, and reporting?

Overhead

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Connecting Assessment With Reporting Case Study

"During the 1995-96 school year, our kindergarten and first grade teachers implemented a new writing assessment model for primary students (see attachment). This model involved applying developmental descriptors to the writing of young children so that growth in writing could be documented. Teachers looked for growth in the quality of ideas, organization, voice, word choice, fluency and conventions. For example, conventions at the primary years might involve growth in orientation of pretend writing on the page, spacing between pretend words and pretend-writing from left to right.

"In addition to improving assessment at the early years, teachers felt the model also improved teaching and learning. For example, the staff felt that the language of the model helped them to articulate clear and appropriate learning targets for students so that they would know what to teach and how to track progress. The assessment tool drove curriculum and instructional strategy reforms that was seen by staff as increasing the quality of teaching and learning for kindergartners and first graders.

"This created a direct link for teachers between assessment and curriculum. The perceived usefulness of the assessment information to influence instruction and to improve student learning furthered the teachers' use of the assessment model. The more they used it, the more perceived impact it had on student performance. This positive cycle powerfully improved the teaching and learning of writing at our school.

"However, during parent-teacher conferences, teachers became frustrated with their ability to share information about student writing performance with parents via the district's report card. They felt the report card limited their reporting to information about printing and copying. This presented a frustrating institutional barrier in their efforts to further their application of writing assessment. After three trimesters of dealing with this mismatch, this group of teachers set out to improve the report card.

"Teachers began by collecting a variety of report cards and grading continuums from other school districts. As a group, they viewed the Video Journals production of "Reporting Student Progress." These sources fueled their early conversations about their goals and resulted in a first draft. During Fall and Spring parent/teacher conferences, teachers described each child's performance to their parents using the new report card. The report card, combined with collections of student daily work, classroom assessments, a formal district-wide writing assessment and teacher descriptions, painted a clear picture of each students' development and achievement. Teachers were extremely pleased with the direct match between the language of the new report card and the formal and informal assessment information they were collecting during the year.

Handout, p. 1

"While our revised report card is not a high tech recording or reporting method, it is providing improved information to a variety of users. As teachers created it, they also constructed a high level of meaning for themselves about the information that it reports. While not at the same high level, the parent and administrative involvement in the process has raised our shared understanding of the report card and we too have constructed strong meanings for the information it reports. Through the process, parent, teachers and administrators have further developed our conceptual understanding of the connection between teaching, curriculum, learning, assessment and reporting. Our end product is a piece of paper, but the process created several equally important results along the way."

—Bill Nutting
Principal, Lincoln School
Mt. Vernon School District, Washington
(1997)

Handout, p. 2

6-Trait Assessment for Beginning Writers

1 EXPERIMENTING	2 EMERGING	3 DEVELOPING	4 CAPABLE	5 EXPERIENCED
IDEAS — Uses scribbles for writing — Dictates labels or a story — Shapes that look like letters — Line forms that imitate text — Writes letters randomly	**IDEAS** — Some recognizable words present — Labels pictures — Uses drawings that show detail — Pictures are supported by some words	**IDEAS** — Attempts a story or to make a point — Illustration supports the writing — Meaning of the general idea is recognizable/understandable — Some ideas clear but some are still fuzzy	**IDEAS** — Writing tells a story or makes a point — Illustration (if present) enhances the writing — Idea is generally on topic — Details are present but not developed (lists)	**IDEAS** — Presents a fresh/original idea — Topic is narrowed and focused — Develops one clear, main idea — Uses interesting, important details for support. — Writer understands topic well
ORGANIZATION — Attempts to write left to right — Attempts to write top/down — No sense of beginning and end yet — Experiments with spacing	**ORGANIZATION** — Consistently writes left to right — Consistently uses top/down — Experiments with beginnings — Begins to group like words/pictures	**ORGANIZATION** — A title is present — Limited transitions present — Beginning but no ending except "The End" — Attempts at sequencing	**ORGANIZATION** — An appropriate title is present — Attempts transitions from sentence to sentence — Beginning works well and attempts an ending — Logical sequencing — Key ideas begin to surface	**ORGANIZATION** — An original title is present — Transitions connect main ideas — The opening attracts — An effective ending is tried — Easy to follow — Important ideas stand out
VOICE — Communicates feeling with color, shape, line in drawing — Work is similar to everyone else's — Ambiguous response to task — Awareness of audience not present	**VOICE** — Hints of voice present in words and phrases — Looks different from most others — Energy/mood is present — Treatment of topic predictable — Audience is fuzzy—could be anybody, anywhere	**VOICE** — Expresses some predictable feelings — Moments of individual sparkle, but then hides — Repetition of familiar ideas reduces energy — Awareness that the writing will be read by someone else — Reader has limited connection to writer	**VOICE** — Writing is individual and expressive — Individual perspective becomes evident — Personal treatment of a standard topic — Writes to convey a story or idea to the reader — Attempts non-standard point of view	**VOICE** — Uses text to elicit a variety of emotions — Takes some risks to say more than what is expected — Point of view is evident — Writes with a clear sense of audience — Cares deeply about the topic

Ruth Culham, 1998. Assessment and Evaluation Program. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, Oregon. With appreciation to the Bellingham, Nooksack, and Kent school districts in Washington; school districts in Kansas; Beaverton School District in Oregon; Albuquerque Public Schools, New Mexico; and Delane Munson and Sandra Marek, Portland, Oregon.

	1 EXPERIMENTING	2 EMERGING	3 DEVELOPING	4 CAPABLE	5 EXPERIENCED
WORD CHOICE	— Writes letters in strings — Imitates word patterns — Pictures stand for words and phrases — Copies environmental print	— Recognizable words — Environmental words used correctly — Attempts at phrases — Functional language	— General or ordinary words — Attempts new words but they don't always fit — Settles for the word or phrase that "will do" — Big words used to impress reader — Relies on slang, clichés, or repetition	— Uses favorite words correctly — Experiments with new and different words with some success — Tries to choose words for specificity — Attempts to use descriptive words to create images	— Everyday words used well — Precise, accurate, fresh, original words — Creates vivid images in a natural way — Avoids repetition, clichés or vague language — Attempts at figurative language
SENTENCE FLUENCY	— Mimics letters and words across the page — Words stand alone — Patterns for sentences not in evidence — Sentence sense not yet present	— Strings words together into phrases — Attempts simple sentences — Short, repetitive sentence patterns — Dialogue present but not understandable	— Uses simple sentences — Sentences tend to begin the same — Experiments with other sentence patterns — Reader may have to reread to follow the meaning — Dialogue present but needs interpretation	— Simple and compound sentences present and effective — Attempts complex sentences — Not all sentences begin the same — Sections of writing have rhythm and flow	— Consistently uses sentence variety — Sentence structure is correct and creative — Variety of sentence beginnings — Natural rhythm, cadence and flow — Sentences have texture which clarify the important idea
CONVENTIONS	— Writes letter strings (pre-phonetic: dmRxzz) — Attempts to create standard letters — Writes word strings — Attempts spacing of words, letters, symbols or pictures — Student interpretation needed to understand text/pictures	— Attempts semi-phonetic spelling (MTR, UM, KD, etc.) — Uses mixed upper and lower case letters — Uses spaces between letters and words — Random punctuation — Nonstandard grammar is common	— Uses phonetic spelling (MOSTR, HUMN, KLOSD, etc.) on personal words — Spelling of high frequency words still spotty — Uses capitals at the beginning of sentences — Usually uses end punctuation correctly (.!?) — Experiments with other punctuation — Long paper may be written as one paragraph — Attempts standard grammar	— Transitional spelling on less frequent words (MONSTUR, HUMUN, CLOSSED, etc.) — Spelling of high frequency words usually correct — Capitals at the beginning of sentences and variable use on proper nouns — End punctuation is correct (.!?) and other punctuation is attempted (such as commas) — Paragraphing variable but present — Noun/pronoun agreement, verb tenses, subject/verb agreement	— High frequency words are spelled correctly and very close on other words — Capitals used for obvious proper nouns as well as sentence beginnings — Basic punctuation is used correctly and/or creatively — Indents consistently to show paragraphs — Shows control over standard grammar

Writing Progress Report

Student:______________________ Teacher:______________________

School Year:________ Grade:____________

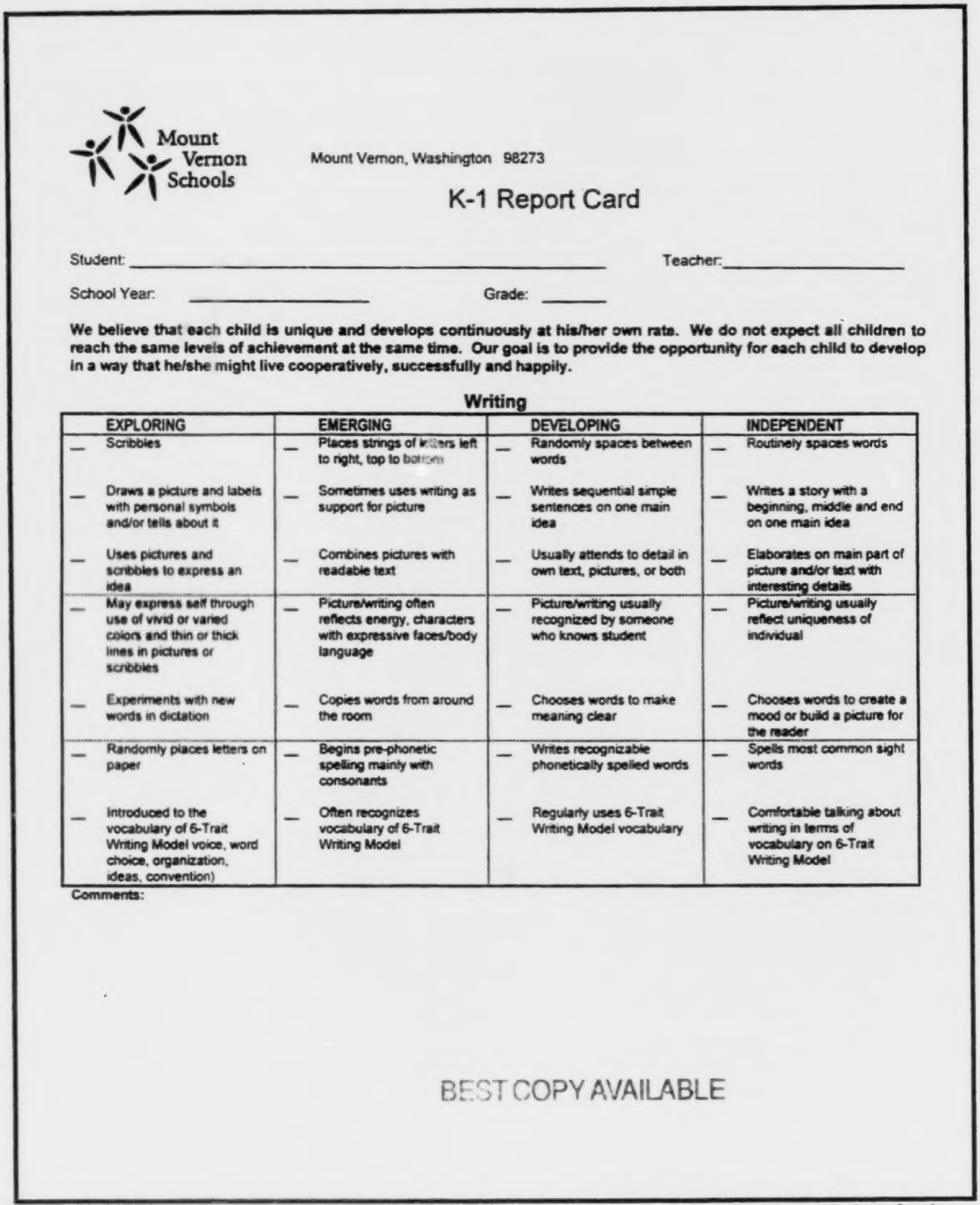
We believe that each child is unique and develops continuously at his/her own rate. Our goal is to provide the opportunity for each child to develop in a way that he/she might live cooperatively, successfully, and happily.

		EXPLORING		EMERGING		DEVELOPING		INDEPENDENT		EXPANDING
Organization	-	Scribbles	-	Places strings of letters left to right, top to bottom	-	Randomly spaces between words	-	Routinely spaces words	-	Writes legibly
	-	Mixes scribbles with some recognizable letters	-	Writes random recognizable letters	-	Forms most letters legibly and correctly	-	Forms all letters legibly and correctly	-	Writes legibly
Main Idea	-	Draws a picture and labels it with personal symbols and/or tells about it	-	Sometimes uses writing as support for picture	-	Focuses on one main idea	-	Writes sequential simple sentences on one main idea	-	Writes a story with a beginning, middle and end on one main idea
Details	-	Uses pictures and scribbles to express an idea	-	Combines pictures with text	-	Usually attends to detail in own text, pictures, or both	-	Supports ideas with details	-	Elaborates on main part of picture and/or text with interesting details
Voice	-	May express self through use of vivid or varied colors, thin or thick lines in pictures or scribbles	-	Picture/writing often reflects energy, characters with expressive faces/body language	-	Picture/writing usually recognized by someone who knows student	-	Picture/writing usually reflects uniqueness of individual	-	Uses an expression of personal style
Word Choice	-	Experiments with new words in dictation	-	Copies words from around the room	-	Chooses interesting words some of the time	-	Chooses interesting words most of the time	-	Chooses interesting words consistently
Spelling	-	Randomly places letters on paper	-	Begins pre-phonetic spelling mainly with consonants	-	Writes recognizable phonetically spelled words	-	Spells most common sight words	-	Spells commonly used words and some difficult words
Conventions	-	Writes part of a name	-	Writes name in upper or lower case letters	-	Capitalizes first name	-	Starts a few sentences with capitals; begin to use punctuation	-	Starts with capitals and ends with punctuation

Code for indicating progress by assessment periods: N = 1st Grading Period; M = 2nd Grading Period; J = 3rd Grading Period

Material reprinted with permission of authors.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



Mount Vernon Schools

Mount Vernon, Washington 98273

K-1 Report Card

Student: ______________________________ Teacher: ______________

School Year: ______________ Grade: ______

We believe that each child is unique and develops continuously at his/her own rate. We do not expect all children to reach the same levels of achievement at the same time. Our goal is to provide the opportunity for each child to develop in a way that he/she might live cooperatively, successfully and happily.

Writing

EXPLORING	EMERGING	DEVELOPING	INDEPENDENT
__ Scribbles	__ Places strings of letters left to right, top to bottom	__ Randomly spaces between words	__ Routinely spaces words
__ Draws a picture and labels with personal symbols and/or tells about it	__ Sometimes uses writing as support for picture	__ Writes sequential simple sentences on one main idea	__ Writes a story with a beginning, middle and end on one main idea
__ Uses pictures and scribbles to express an idea	__ Combines pictures with readable text	__ Usually attends to detail in own text, pictures, or both	__ Elaborates on main part of picture and/or text with interesting details
__ May express self through use of vivid or varied colors and thin or thick lines in pictures or scribbles	__ Picture/writing often reflects energy, characters with expressive faces/body language	__ Picture/writing usually recognized by someone who knows student	__ Picture/writing usually reflect uniqueness of individual
__ Experiments with new words in dictation	__ Copies words from around the room	__ Chooses words to make meaning clear	__ Chooses words to create a mood or build a picture for the reader
__ Randomly places letters on paper	__ Begins pre-phonetic spelling mainly with consonants	__ Writes recognizable phonetically spelled words	__ Spells most common sight words
__ Introduced to the vocabulary of 6-Trait Writing Model voice, word choice, organization, ideas, convention)	__ Often recognizes vocabulary of 6-Trait Writing Model	__ Regularly uses 6-Trait Writing Model vocabulary	__ Comfortable talking about writing in terms of vocabulary on 6-Trait Writing Model

Comments:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Handout reproduced with permission of authors.

Mini-Lesson #6— What's the Match?[1]

Purpose

This activity leads to reflection about designing tasks and performance criteria that not only align to each other, but also clearly correspond to and measure important learning targets, such as local content standards.

Rationale

Many teachers are experimenting with scoring guides such as rubrics, performance criteria. Common problems with these rubrics are: including irrelevant features, not being clear on what is meant, forgetting to include really important things, developing tasks that don't really elicit the skills described on the rubric, including counts of errors where levels of quality would be more meaningful, and mixing too many skills from disparate areas. This activity explores some of these issues.

Prerequisites

This might not be a first activity; it could come in the middle of assessment study. Teachers are feeling pressure to use performance assessments and want ideas on how to do it well. Thus, this activity might be a good motivator for learning more about assessment.

Time

30-45 minutes

Focus

Key 1: What: Clear and appropriate targets. Before deciding on how good the criteria are for judging the quality of student performance, teachers have to be clear on what is to be assessed by the task—remembering a piece of information, conceptual understanding, creative thinking, divergent thinking, problem solving? The scenario states that the teachers are scoring "correctness of the answer." Why are they doing that? What is "correctness" supposed to be indicative of—critical thinking, conceptual understanding, remembering facts? The criteria can 't be clarified until it is clear what student skills are being assessed through correctness of the answer.

---

[1] Adapted from *Making Connections Case Studies* by Kathleen Busick and Rick Stiggins, 1997, Portland, OR: Assessment Training Institute.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Key 3: How: Target-method match. An open-ended response might not be the best way to assess whatever it is that the test question was designed to measure. But, without knowing what the question was supposed to measure, it's hard to determine whether an essay scored with a rubric is best to use. It might even be the case that the intended outcome was not worth assessing at all.

Key 5: How Accurate: Eliminating possible sources of bias and distortion. This scenario specifically discusses the possible error in making judgements about student proficiency that comes from (a) unclear criteria, (b) an unclear task, and (c) a possible mismatch between the task and the criteria.

Materials

Handout: Case Study 7.4 from *Making Connections* (attached)

Overhead: Discussion Questions (attached)

Facilitator's Outline

Introduction:

"Prompts and scoring criteria need field testing with students to uncover potentially confusing elements. We also need to consider whether performance assessment is the best way to measure certain student learning goals, and whether some of the things we are assessing are worth assessing at all. This example helps us explore these ideas."

1. (5 minutes) Optional. Put up the Five Keys to Quality Assessment bubble overhead from **Appendix A**. Briefly review the nature of good quality assessment by describing the five bubbles. Indicate that this activity focuses on Keys 1, 3, and 5.
2. (10-20 minutes) Ask teachers to read Case Study 7.4 and respond to the first set and second set of initial reflection questions.
3. (15-20 minutes) Discussion questions (see attached overhead)
    - Is it clear what the teacher is attempting to assess? What do you think the teacher is trying to assess? Is this worth assessing?
    - If it's worth assessing, is an open-ended format the best way to assess it? What might be some other options?
    - If an open-ended format is best, how might the task and criteria be improved? .
4. (5 minutes) Closure: Ask teachers to reflect on implications for their classroom of this activity and record their thoughts in their learning journals.

Task and Criteria Match

Discussion Questions

- Is it clear what the teacher is attempting to assess? What do you think the teacher is trying to assess? Is this worth assessing?

- If it's worth assessing, is an open-ended format the best (balancing ideal and efficient) way to assess it? What might be some other options?

- If an open-ended format is best, how might the task and criteria be improved?

Overhead

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

7.4 ACCOUNTING FOR MORE: WHAT'S THE MATCH BETWEEN THE TASK AND THE CRITERIA?

You're part of a group of middle school teachers scoring student responses to a simple task. The scoring guide uses a continuum that combines numeric scores (5-1) and descriptive words (Exemplary, Proficient, Developing, etc.). As you work, you are beginning to develop mental pictures of the various levels of performance for criteria like Reasoning and Communication. However, another of the criteria/dimensions that you are scoring is the correctness of the answer.

There isn't much of a description for this criterion and at first that doesn't seem to be a problem. As one of the teachers at your table jokes, how can there be degrees of correctness to a correct answer?

Here's the task and two sample responses:[1]

Task: A farmer lost his entire crop. Why might this have happened?

Sample 1

- Drought

Sample 2

- Floods and heavy rains destroyed them.
- Drought destroyed them.
- Was demolished for business construction.
- Went bankrupt, unable to look after his crop.
- Unsuitable soil/land, so the crop died.
- The birds ate all the seeds.
- He didn't take proper care of his crops.
- Unsuitable environment for growing his crops

Initial Reflections

1. What's your initial response to the students' answers?
2. On a scale from 1-5, with 5 being exemplary, what score would you give the answer in the first sample? Why? How would you score the answer in second example? Why?

Now the case continues:

It seemed fairly obvious that the second response was a much fuller and more complete answer. Then someone at the table raises the question of whether the exercise communicated clearly to students that multiple reasons were required for an excellent answer. He asks the group to think about the student who provided the first sample.

Article excerpt reprinted with permission of authors.

Handout, p. 1

"How could we respond if the student pointed out that the question was answered and the answer is correct? I know that some of my students would think it was really unfair to demand more than the task prompts, especially at their age, when they are incredibly sensitive about fairness."

Another teacher argues that we had to be honest about the quality of the answers. "The first student's answer is OK but not sufficient to be scored exemplary. It isn't even a complete sentence. Any student would know that such a minimal answer is not going to get a high score."

The first teacher disagrees. "I don't think that the prompt was clear about what would constitute an exemplary answer. If we want students to produce quality work, they need to include enough detail in the task to help them understand what quality work looks like."

A third teacher calls everyone back to the criteria. "Our rubric isn't fully developed yet. This is an example of what happens when we only have the criteria—we can all interpret them differently and so can the students."

Initial Reflections

1. Is it fair to place one student higher on a continuum of achievement when there was nothing in the prompt that suggested more than one solution would be rewarded? Or should they both get the same score since both provided correct answers? Why?

Discussion Starters

1. What strategies could be used to assure that the criteria for strong responses are clearly understood by students?
2. How closely should the task prompts match the criteria?
3. Would it be better for this group to use task-specific (rather than generic) criteria? What are the advantages? What are the disadvantages?
4. When can we remove mental scaffolding and demand that students understand the requirements of exemplary responses?

Notes

[1] From *A Toolkit for Professional Developers: Mathematics and Science Alternative Assessment* (Portland, Oregon: Laboratory Network Program, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1995). Reprinted by permission.

Article excerpt reprinted with permission of authors.

Handout, p. 2

Mini-Lesson #7—
Do We Know Our Target?

Purpose

To practice using the Five Keys to Quality Assessment to solve dilemmas arising from a case study.

Rationale

Case studies are a good, real-life way to engage teachers in the study of assessment issues.

Prerequisites

Teachers should have some experience with the Five Keys to Quality Assessment. This *Mini-Lesson* would be best for the middle of assessment study.

Time 30 minutes

Focus

Key 1: What: Clear and appropriate targets. The teachers in the scenario can't really decide on assessment approaches because they have not yet decided on their targets for reading instruction.

Key 2: Who: Clear and appropriate users and uses. The teachers' assessment use is clear: to group and regroup students into reading groups by ability. They may want to consider whether this is the only use and users for the assessments they are planning.

Key 3: How: Target-method match. Appropriate methods can only be determined when it is clear what is to be assessed.

Key 4: How Much: Sampling. Moving students from group to group needs to be based on enough evidence to reliably make a decision.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Key 5: How Accurate: Eliminating possible sources of bias and distortion. The teachers in the scenario specifically mentioned one possible source of bias and distortion: student prior knowledge and background.

Materials

Handout:

- Do We Know Our Targets? case study (attached)

Overheads:

- Five Keys to Quality Assessment (**Appendix A**)
- Discussion Questions (attached)

Facilitator's Outline

Introduction:

"Sometimes there are important assessment implications of new instructional techniques or programs. We're going to look at one such situation faced recently by another group of teachers and use our knowledge of the Five Keys to Quality Assessment to give them advice on what to do."

1. (10 minutes) Pass out the case study and ask participants to individually reflect on the discussion questions:
    - What other assessment questions does this situation raise for you? (Possible answers: sampling, logistics/handling of information, other users and uses.)
    - Which Keys to Quality Assessment are addressed in this example? Categorize the list of questions by keys.
    - What does this example suggest about the connection between sound assessment practices and school improvement efforts? (One possible answer: assessment is an integral part of all school improvement.)
    - What advice might you give this faculty?
2. (10 minutes) Break participants into groups to address the discussion questions. Use the Five Keys to Quality Assessment (**Appendix A**) overhead as needed.
3. (10 minutes) Ask: "Do we have any similar situations at our school that we need to discuss?"

Do We Know Our Target?
Discussion Questions

- What other assessment questions does this situation raise for you?
- Which Keys to Quality Assessment are addressed in this example? Categorize the list of questions by keys.
- What does this example suggest about the connection between sound assessment practices and school improvement efforts?
- What advice might you give this faculty?

Overhead

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Do We Know Our Target?
Case Study

"As part of our school improvement planning process for school year 1997-98, our staff reviewed a great deal of research in the area of effective beginning reading instruction. Part of this review included a focus on the elements of the Success For All model, developed at Johns Hopkins University.

"An element of that model fueled a great deal of conversation—the idea of grouping and regrouping children by similar reading abilities to better focus reading instruction. On the positive side, this procedure would narrow the range of abilities in a group and provide continual assessment to enable children to move forward to another group as they progressed.

"We decided on an eight-week cycle and began planning for implementation. Quickly, we realized that grouping and re-grouping children from an assessment raised dozens of questions which we were not prepared to answer. Some of these questions were:

- What are our targets for student performance? Oral fluency? Oral reading comprehension? Silent reading comprehension? Decoding? Phonemic awareness?
- Do we all agree on what, for example, phonemic awareness is?
- Do we know how to assess these things? How will we know if we are assessing what we're teaching and not, say, a student's prior knowledge and life experience?
- How will we know when a student should move to another group?
- Do we agree on what and how we will teach so that students can fluidly move from group to group?"

Handout

Mini-Lesson #8—
A Success Story

Purpose

To analyze the strengths and weaknesses of a specific assessment implementation, and to consider the relationships between assessment, teaching, school reform, and staff development.

Rationale

Case studies are a good, real-life way to engage teachers in the study of assessment issues.

Note from Bill Nutting: *As I reflect back on this, it seems that this could be a good lesson to go through to help a staff move toward data-driven decisions. All schools are making improvement plans, in some fashion, and those plans should be driven by a needs assessment that is founded in data.*

Prerequisites

This activity would be more meaningful in the middle of assessment study. It would be helpful to have had some experience with the Five Keys to Quality Assessment and the 6+1 Traits Model for assessing writing.

Time 20-30 minutes

Focus

Key 1: What: Clear and appropriate targets. The ability to use the 6+1 Traits Model for both assessment and instruction came from its clear description of the target to be hit, in this case good quality writing. Well-constructed performance criteria, also called rubrics or scoring guides, serve to clarify targets. What is in the rubric *becomes* the target, so it is wise to make sure the rubric covers that which is of most importance, leaves off that which is not of importance, and clearly describes the nature of quality in a way that is universally accepted.

Key 2: Who: Clear and appropriate users and uses. The building in this scenario began with the purpose of continuous monitoring of student progress in writing and instruction for those using the 6+1 Traits Model. However, because of the clarity of the rubric, they found it also useful for accountability, reporting to parents, and evaluating the quality of instruction.

Key 3: How: Target-method match. Actually having students write is the best way to assess ability to write.

Key 4: How Much: Sampling. A single sample of writing at pre- and posttest time is not enough to judge the progress of individual students. Averaged over a large group of students, however, progress for the group as a whole can be determined. But, the nature of the prompts selected is another sampling issue. Were the prompts only narrative? Expository? Persuasive? If too narrowly focused, a biased picture of either individual or group writing achievement might emerge. Also, if only one type of writing is assessed, teachers might focus on this type to the exclusion of other types of writing. Thus, the curriculum could narrow. So, sampling might be an issue in this example.

Key 5: How Accurate: Eliminating possible sources of bias and distortion. One possible source of bias and distortion in this example is that teachers knew which samples of student writing were from the pre- and the posttest. Subconsciously this might have affected scoring. Another potential source of bias and distortion—teachers scoring their own students' work—was avoided due to the group consensus procedures they used to check each other's scoring.

Materials

Handouts:

- Attached case study, A Success Story
- Attached 6+1 Traits rubric

Overheads:

- Five Keys to Quality Assessment (**Appendix A**)
- Discussion Questions (attached)

Facilitator's Outline

Introduction:

"This case study tracks the successful implementation of an assessment reform over time. In this example look for the factors which contributed to the success of the implementation."

1. (5 minutes) Ask teachers to read the scenario.

2. (5-10 minutes) Discuss any questions teachers might have about the scenario or the 6+1 Traits Model.

3. (5-15 minutes) Discuss the questions on the attached overhead:
   a. What were the elements in this example that supported the successful implementation of an assessment model—time, clear focus on writing, opportunities for professional development, leadership by the principal, a good quality assessment to implement?
   b. Which Keys to Quality Assessment were highlighted in this example? What were the potential sources of sampling problems and bias/distortion? (See Focus, above.) Use the Five Keys overhead from **Appendix A** as needed.
   c. What does this example suggest about the connection between sound assessment and school improvement efforts? Possible answer: Decisions need to be made based on information from good quality assessments.
4. (5 minutes) Closure. Ask: "What was learned from this example that might help our own school in our assessment development efforts?" Ask teachers to either write in their learning journals or plan further discussion on this topic.

Case Study: A Success Story
Implementation of the 6+1 Traits Model

"In the early 1990's a large core group of teachers in our district received training on the 6+1 Traits Writing Assessment Model. The rubric for the model (attached) is designed to describe good quality writing so clearly that everyone (teachers, students, and parents) knows the target at which students are shooting.

"The model, thus, is used for more than just *assessing* writing. It's also used to help students understand the nature of quality writing so that they can assess their own writing and know what to do to revise it. By teaching students to be assessors of writing it is hoped that writing proficiency will increase.

"Out of our building's school improvement planning process, our staff made a shared commitment to focus on writing instruction during the 1995-96 school year. We dedicated ourselves to train all teachers on the 6+1 Traits Model and to conduct a pre- and post-assessment, using the odel as our scoring guide.

"Our teachers determined the prompts for each grade level and created the procedures to conduct the pre-assessment. Following writing, each teacher used the 6+1 Traits rubrics to assign scores to their students' papers. Then, in grade level teams, they met and compared papers and scores. This was done in an effort to create scoring consistency, but what occurred was even more important than that. The powerful conversations that took place around these 'real' student papers were wonderful learning experiences for all staff. It helped them to really know what quality looked like in the day-to-day work of students, and to examine each other's points of view. The discussions evolved into conversations about lessons to teach the traits to students.

"Attention to implementing the model was very high. Teachers knew we would be re-assessing our students in the spring and we all wanted to see our students improve over time. Since this was our building focus for the year, the principal made a point of conducting teacher observations during writing lessons. These observations, which were part of the teacher evaluation process, were followed up by post-observation conferences. This gave teachers another opportunity to reflect upon their implementation of the model, and it helped to keep the development of effective writing instruction moving forward.

"During spring 1996, we conducted our post-assessment. It was a wonderful experience to have such clear examples of where children began and how far they had progressed during the year. We decided to keep our focus on writing during the 1996-97 school year to consolidate the gains made thus far and continue to learn how to teach the model to students. It was felt that impact on student writing would be lessened if we moved too quickly to another building-wide project.

Handout, p. 1

"The process we took clearly aided us in articulating clear assessment targets for our teachers and students. This has enabled us to use the model for a variety of users and uses. The continuous scoring nature of the model allowed us to chart student achievement and growth over time. Additionally, the model assists students to revise their writing, communicates achievement information well to parents, and provides accountability information on our writing program to our school board. While our data collection is not terribly sophisticated at this time, we are able to manage our writing assessment information in a variety of helpful ways and for a variety of users and uses.

"The journey our staff is on is building our assessment literacy through a real task, the implementation of a performance writing assessment model. Through this process we've developed insight into the importance of clear targets, clear purposes for assessment, proper assessment methods, appropriate sampling and the potential pitfalls we must watch for. This learning is not just specific to the 6+1 Traits Model, but is transferable to all student assessment."

Handout, p. 2

A Success Story

Discussion Questions

- What were the elements in this example that supported successful implementation of the assessment model?

- Which Keys to Quality Assessment were highlighted in this example? What were the sampling and bias and distortion problems?
- What does this example suggest about the connection between sound assessment and school improvement efforts?

Overhead

6 + 1 Traits

of Analytic Writing Assessment Scoring Guide (Rubric)

- IDEAS
- ORGANIZATION
- VOICE
- WORD CHOICE
- SENTENCE FLUENCY
- CONVENTIONS
- PRESENTATION

WOW!

Exceeds expectations

⑤ STRONG:

shows control and skill in this trait; many strengths present

④ COMPETENT:

on balance, the strengths outweigh the weaknesses; a small amount of revision is needed

③ DEVELOPING:

strengths and need for revision are about equal; about half-way home

② EMERGING:

need for revision outweighs strengths; isolated moments hint at what the writer has in mind

① NOT YET:

a bare beginning; writer not yet showing any control

IDEAS AND CONTENT

(Development)

⑤ ***This paper is clear and focused. It holds the reader's attention. Relevant anecdotes and details enrich the central theme.***

A. The topic is **narrow** and **manageable.**
B. **Relevant, telling, quality details** give the reader important information that goes **beyond the obvious** or predictable.
C. Reasonably **accurate details** are present to support the main ideas.
D. The writer seems to be writing from **knowledge** or **experience;** the ideas are **fresh** and **original.**
E. The reader's questions are **anticipated and answered.**
F. **Insight**—an understanding of life and a knack for picking out what is significant—is an indicator of high level performance, though not required.

③ ***The writer is beginning to define the topic, even though development is still basic or general.***

A. The **topic is fairly broad;** however, you can see where the writer is headed.
B. **Support is attempted**, but doesn't go far enough yet in fleshing out the key issues or story line.
C. Ideas are **reasonably clear**, though they may not be detailed, personalized, accurate, or expanded enough to show indepth understanding or a strong sense of purpose.
D. The writer seems to be drawing on knowledge or experience, but has **difficulty going from general observations to specifics.**
E. The reader is **left with questions.** More information is needed to "fill in the blanks."
F. The writer **generally stays on the topic** but does not develop a clear theme. The writer has not yet focused the topic past the obvious.

① ***As yet, the paper has no clear sense of purpose or central theme. To extract meaning from the text, the reader must make inferences based on sketchy or missing details. The writing reflects more than one of these problems:***

A. The writer is **still in search of a topic**, brainstorming, or has not yet decided what the main idea of the piece will be.
B. Information is **limited** or **unclear** or the **length is not adequate** for development.
C. The idea is a **simple restatement** of the topic or an **answer** to the question with little or no attention to detail.
D. The writer has **not begun to define the topic** in a meaningful, personal way.
E. **Everything seems as important as everything else**; the reader has a hard time sifting out what is important.
F. The text may be **repetitious**, or may read like a collection of **disconnected, random thoughts** with no discernable point.

ORGANIZATION

⑤ ***The organization enhances and showcases the central idea or theme. The order, structure, or presentation of information is compelling and moves the reader through the text.***

A. An **inviting introduction** draws the reader in; a **satisfying conclusion** leaves the reader with a sense of closure and resolution.
B. **Thoughtful transitions** clearly show how ideas connect.
C. Details seem to fit where they're placed; **sequencing is logical** and **effective**.
D. **Pacing is well controlled**; the writer knows when to slow down and elaborate, and when to pick up the pace and move on.
E. The **title,** if desired, is **original** and captures the central theme of the piece.
F. Organization **flows so smoothly** the reader hardly thinks about it; the choice of structure matches the **purpose** and **audience**.

③ ***The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion.***

A. The paper has a **recognizable introduction and conclusion**. The introduction may not create a strong sense of anticipation; the conclusion may not tie up all loose ends.
B. **Transitions often work well**; at other times, connections between ideas are fuzzy.
C. **Sequencing** shows **some logic**, but not under control enough that it consistently supports the ideas. In fact, sometimes it is so predictable and rehearsed that the **structure takes attention away from the content.**
D. **Pacing is fairly well controlled,** though the writer sometimes lunges ahead too quickly or spends too much time on details that do not matter.
E. A **title (if desired) is present,** although it may be uninspired or an obvious restatement of the prompt or topic.
F. The **organization sometimes supports the main point or storyline;** at other times, the reader feels an urge to slip in a transition or move things around.

① ***The writing lacks a clear sense of direction. Ideas, details, or events seem strung together in a loose or random fashion; there is no identifiable internal structure. The writing reflects more than one of these problems:***

A. There is **no real lead** to set up what follows, **no real conclusion** to wrap things up.
B. Connections between ideas are **confusing** or not even present.
C. **Sequencing needs** lots and lots of **work.**
D. **Pacing feels awkward;** the writer slows to a crawl when the reader wants to get on with it, and vice versa.
E. **No title is present** (if requested), or if present, **does not match** well with the content.
F. Problems with organization make it **hard for the reader to get a grip** on the main point or story line.

VOICE

⑤ ***The writer speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individual, compelling and engaging. The writer crafts the writing with an awareness and respect for the audience and the purpose for writing.***

A. The tone of the writing **adds interest** to the message and is **appropriate for the purpose and audience.**
B. The reader feels a **strong interaction** with the writer, sensing the **person behind the words.**
C. The writer **takes a risk** by revealing who he or she is consistently throughout the piece.
D. **Expository or persuasive** writing reflects a **strong commitment** to the topic by showing **why** the **reader needs to know this** and why he or she should care.
E. **Narrative** writing is **honest, personal, engaging** and makes you **think about and react to** the author's ideas and point of view.

③ ***The writer seems sincere, but not fully engaged or involved. The result is pleasant or even personable, but not compelling.***

A. The writer seems aware of an audience but discards personal insights in favor of **obvious generalities.**
B. The writing communicates in an **earnest, pleasing, yet safe** manner.
C. Only **one or two moments here or there** intrigue, delight, or move the reader. These places may **emerge strongly for a line or two, but quickly fade away.**
D. **Expository or persuasive** writing **lacks consistent engagement** with the topic to build credibility.
E. **Narrative** writing is **reasonably sincere,** but doesn't reflect unique or individual perspective on the topic.

① ***The writer seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from the topic and/or the audience. As a result, the paper reflects more than one of the following problems:***

A. The writer is **not concerned with the audience**. The writer's style is a **complete mismatch** for the intended reader or the writing is **so short** that little is accomplished beyond introducing the topic.
B. The writer speaks in a kind of **monotone** that flattens all potential highs or lows of the message.
C. The writing is **humdrum and "risk-free."**
D. The writing is **lifeless or mechanical**; depending on the topic, it may be overly technical or jargonistic.
E. The development of the topic is **so limited** that **no point of view is present**—zip, zero, zilch, nada.

80

WORD CHOICE

⑤ ***Words convey the intended message in a precise, interesting, and natural way. The words are powerful and engaging.***

A. Words are **specific** and **accurate**; it is easy to understand just what the writer means.
B. The words and phrases **create pictures and linger in your mind.**
C. The language is **natural and never overdone**; both words and phrases are **individual** and **effective**.
D. **Striking words and phrases** often catch the reader's eye—and linger in the reader's mind. (You can recall a handful as you reflect on the paper.)
E. **Lively verbs** energize the writing. **Precise nouns and modifiers** add depth and specificity.
F. **Precision** is obvious. The writer has taken care to put just the right word or phrase in just the right spot.

③ ***The language is functional, even if it lacks much energy. It is easy to figure out the writer's meaning on a general level.***

A. Words are **adequate and correct in a general sense;** they simply **lack much flair and originality**.
B. Familiar **words and phrases communicate,** but rarely capture the reader's imagination. Still, the paper may have **one or two fine moments**.
C. **Attempts at colorful language** show a willingness to stretch and grow, but sometimes it goes too far (thesaurus overload!).
D. The writing is marked by **passive verbs, everyday nouns and adjectives, and lack of interesting adverbs.**
E. The words are only occasionally refined; it's more often, **"the first thing that popped into my mind."**
F. The words and phrases are **functional**—with only a moment or two of sparkle.

① ***The writer struggles with a limited vocabulary, searching for words to convey meaning. The writing reflects more than one of these problems:***

A. Language is so **vague** (e.g., *It was a fun time, She was neat, It was nice, We did lots of stuff*) that only a **limited message** comes through.
B. **"Blah, blah, blah"** is all that the reader reads and hears.
C. **Words are used incorrectly,** making the message secondary to the misfires with the words.
D. **Limited vocabulary** and/or frequent **misuse of parts of speech** impair understanding.
E. **Jargon or clichés** distract or mislead. Persistent **redundancy** distracts the reader.
F. Problems with language **leave the reader wondering** what the writer is trying to say. The **words just don't work** in this piece.

SENTENCE FLUENCY

⑤ ***The writing has an easy flow, rhythm and cadence. Sentences are well built, with strong and varied structure that invites expressive oral reading.***

A. Sentences are constructed in a way that underscores and enhances the **meaning**.
B. Sentences **vary in length as well as structure.** Fragments, if used, add style. Dialogue, if present, sounds natural.
C. **Purposeful** and **varied sentence beginnings** add variety and energy.
D. The use of **creative and appropriate connectives** between sentences and thoughts shows how each relates to, and builds upon, the one before it.
E. The writing has **cadence;** the writer has thought about the sound of the words as well as the meaning. The first time you read it aloud is a breeze.

③ ***The text hums along with a steady beat, but tends to be more pleasant or businesslike than musical, more mechanical than fluid.***

A. Although sentences may not seem artfully crafted or musical, **they get the job done in a routine fashion.**
B. Sentences are **usually constructed correctly;** they **hang together**; they are **sound**.
C. **Sentence beginnings** are not ALL alike; **some variety is attempted.**
D. The reader sometimes has to **hunt for clues** (e.g., connecting words and phrases like *however, therefore, naturally, after a while, on the other hand, to be specific, for example, next, first of all, later, but as it turned out, although,* etc.) that show how sentences interrelate.
E. **Parts** of the text **invite expressive oral reading**; others may be stiff, awkward, choppy, or gangly.

① ***The reader has to practice quite a bit in order to give this paper a fair interpretive reading. The writing reflects more than one of the following problems:***

A. Sentences are **choppy, incomplete, rambling or awkward**; they need work. **Phrasing does not sound natural**. The patterns may create a sing-song rhythm, or a chop-chop cadence that lulls the reader to sleep.
B. There is little to **no "sentence sense"** present. Even if this piece were flawlessly edited, the sentences would not hang together.
C. Many **sentences begin the same way**—and may follow the same patterns (e.g., *subject-verb-object*) in a monotonous pattern.
D. **Endless connectives** (*and, and so, but then, because, and then,* etc.) or a **complete lack of connectives** create a massive jumble of language.
E. The text **does not invite expressive oral reading.**

CONVENTIONS

⑤ ***The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (e.g., spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, paragraphing) and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability. Errors tend to be so few that just minor touch-ups would get this piece ready to publish.***

A. **Spelling is generally correct**, even on more difficult words.
B. The **punctuation is accurate,** even creative, and guides the reader through the text.
C. A thorough understanding and consistent application of **capitalization** skills are present.
D. **Grammar and usage are correct** and contribute to clarity and style.
E. **Paragraphing tends to be sound** and reinforces the organizational structure.
F. The writer **may manipulate conventions** for stylistic effect—and it works! The piece is very close to being **ready to publish.**

GRADES 7 AND UP ONLY: The writing is sufficiently complex to allow the writer to show skill in using a wide range of conventions. For writers at younger ages, the writing shows control over those conventions that are grade/age appropriate.

③ ***The writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions. Conventions are sometimes handled well and enhance readability; at other times, errors are distracting and impair readability.***

A. **Spelling** is usually **correct or reasonably phonetic on common words,** but more difficult words are problematic.
B. **End punctuation is usually correct**; internal punctuation *(commas, apostrophes, semicolons, dashes, colons, parentheses)* is sometimes missing/wrong.
C. **Most words are capitalized correctly;** control over more sophisticated capitalization skills may be spotty.
D. **Paragraphing is attempted** but may run together or begin in the wrong places.
E. **Problems with grammar or usage are not serious** enough to distort meaning but may not be correct or accurately applied all of the time.
F. **Moderate** (a little of this, a little of that) **editing** would be required to polish the text for publication.

① ***Errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, usage and grammar and/or paragraphing repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read. The writing reflects more than one of these problems:***

A. **Spelling errors are frequent,** even on common words.
B. **Punctuation** (including terminal punctuation) is often **missing or incorrect**.
C. **Capitalization** is **random** and only the easiest rules show awareness of correct use.
D. **Errors in grammar or usage are very noticeable,** frequent, and affect meaning.
E. **Paragraphing is missing, irregular, or so frequent** (every sentence) that it has no relationship to the organizational structure of the text.
F. The reader must **read once to decode**, then again for meaning. **Extensive editing** (virtually every line) would be required to polish the text for publication.

PRESENTATION

(optional)

⑤ ***The form and presentation of the text enhances the ability for the reader to understand and connect with the message. It is pleasing to the eye.***

A. If handwritten (either cursive or printed), the **slant is consistent**, letters are clearly formed, **spacing is uniform** between words, and the text is easy to read.

B. If word-processed, there is **appropriate use of fonts and font sizes** which invites the reader into the text.

C. The use of **white space** on the page (spacing, margins, etc.) allows the intended audience to easily focus on the text and message without distractions. There is just the right amount of balance of white space and text on the page. The formatting suits the purpose for writing.

D. The use of a **title, side heads, page numbering, bullets,** and evidence of correct use of a style sheet (when appropriate) makes it easy for the reader to access the desired information and text. These markers allow the hierarchy of information to be clear to the reader.

E. When appropriate to the purpose and audience, there is **effective integration of text and illustrations, charts, graphs, maps, tables, etc.** There is clear alignment between the text and visuals. The visuals support and clarify important information or key points made in the text.

③ ***The writer's message is understandable in this format.***

A. **Handwriting is readable,** although there may be **discrepancies in letter shape and form, slant, and spacing** that may make some words or passages easier to read than others.

B. **Experimentation with fonts and font sizes** is successful in some places, but begins to get fussy and cluttered in others. The **effect is not consistent** throughout the text.

C. While margins may be present, **some text may crowd the edges.** Consistent spacing is applied, although a different choice may make text more accessible (e.g. single, double, or triple spacing).

D. Although some markers are present (titles, numbering, bullets, side heads, etc.) they are not used to their fullest potential as a guide for the reader to access the greatest meaning from the text.

E. An **attempt is made to integrate visuals** and the text although the connections may be limited.

① ***The reader receives a garbled message due to problems relating to the presentation of the text.***

A. Because the letters are irregularly slanted, formed inconsistently, or incorrectly, and the spacing is unbalanced or not even present, it is **very difficult to read and understand the text.**

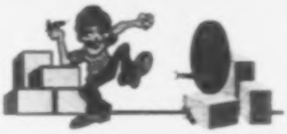
B. The writer has gone **wild with multiple fonts and font sizes.** It is a major distraction to the reader.

C. The **spacing is random and confusing** to the reader. There may be little or no white space on the page.

D. **Lack of markers** (title, page numbering, bullets, side heads, etc.) leave the reader wondering how one section connects to another and why the text is organized in this manner on the page.

E. The visuals do not support or further illustrate key ideas presented in the text. They may be **misleading, indecipherable, or too complex** to be understood.

Mini-Lesson #9—
Sam's Story[1]



Purpose

Demonstrates the need for multiple assessment measures and the strengths and weaknesses of various measures for different users and uses.

Prerequisites

This *Mini-Lesson* can be used in the middle of assessment study. Prerequisites would be an overview of the Keys to Quality Assessment and a chance to think about one's own assessment practices and why there is attention on assessment right now (**Mini-Lessons #10**—*Assessment Principles* or **#16**—*Changing Assessment Practices*).

Time

30-45 minutes

Focus

Key 1: What: Clear and appropriate targets. In the example, the teacher wants to determine Sam's level of proficiency in math so he or she can plan instruction. Level of proficiency in math is not necessarily a very clear target. Perhaps it would be easier to select the best assessment method(s) if the target were specified in more detail.

Key 2: Who: Clear and appropriate users and uses. This example asks participants to consider how their choice of appropriate methods might differ for various users and uses.

Key 3: How: Target-method match. This example focuses on the match between targets, users/uses, and methods. It points up the need for multiple measures.

Key 4: How Much: Sampling. Again, this example points up the need for multiple measures of math proficiency so that a good, rounded picture can emerge.

◆

---

[1] Adapted from Laboratory Network Program, *Improving Classroom Assessment: A Toolkit for Professional Developers* (Activity 2.8). Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1998

Key 5: How Accurate—Eliminating possible sources of bias and distortion. Each method discussed has possible sources of bias and distortion. This is why multiple-measures are necessary.

Materials

Handout:

- Sam's Story (attached)

Overheads:

- Five Keys to Quality Assessment (**Appendix A**)
- Summary Chart (attached)
- Discussion Questions (attached)

Facilitator's Outline

Introduction:

"We are going to look at a fictional student named Sam. If you wanted to determine Sam's proficiency in math, what information might you use?"

1. (5 minutes) Ask teachers to individually brainstorm a list of possible sources of information.

2. (5 minutes) Ask them to compare their list to that of Sam's teacher on the handout Sam's Story.

3. (5 minutes) In small groups, ask teachers to determine the level of faith they have in each of the 10 methods listed by Sam's teacher. Instructions are repeated at the top of the handout Sam's Story.

4. (10 minutes) In the whole group, debrief using the overhead Summary Chart.

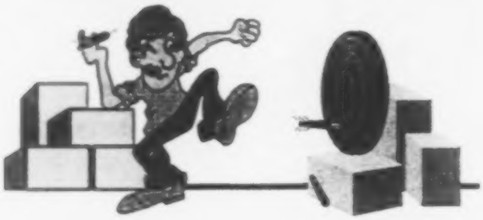
5. (10-20 minutes) Discuss these follow-up questions. Use the Keys to Quality Assessment overhead (**Appendix A**) as needed.

   - Are there any measures you trust solely? Why, or why not?
   - Do the measures that have the highest level of faith share anything in common? They are probably most closely related to the desired target.
   - Would your responses look different if we wanted to use the information to answer the question, "Is Sam working up to his potential?"
   - What additional information would you like to have about Sam to design a math instructional plan for him?
   - What Keys to Quality Assessment are highlighted in this example?

Summary Chart	Would trust as a sole measure	Would trust as one of several highly relevant measures	Not directly relevant, but information might be useful	Wouldn't tell me much that's useful
1. In-class math tests from last year				
2. IQ score				
3. Norm-referenced, multiple choice math test				
4. State math assessment				
5. One example of problem-solving ability on a math word problem				
6. Psychological assessment results				
7. Portfolio of work in math				
8. Self-report on performance in math				
9. Sam's teacher's assessment of his performance in math				
10. Sam's parents assessment of his performance in math				

Overhead

Sam's Story
Discussion Questions



- Are there any measures you trust solely? Why, or why not?
- Do the measures that have the highest level of faith share anything in common?
- Would your responses look different if we were asking a different question, such as, "Is Sam working up to his potential?"
- What additional information would you like to have about Sam to design a math instructional plan for him?
- What Keys to Quality Assessment are highlighted in this example?

Overhead

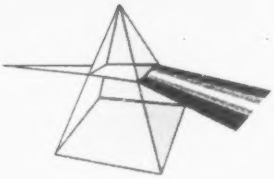
Sam's Story

You are Sam's new teacher for the coming school year. You are trying to determine Sam's level of proficiency in math. You are interested in making a decision about Sam's mastery of the mathematics content taught and to design an instructional plan for him. How much faith would you place in each of the following?

	Would trust as a sole measure	**Would trust as one of several highly relevant measures**	**Not directly relevant, but information might be useful**	**Wouldn't tell me much that's useful**
1. Sam's math scores on his in-class math tests from last year				
2. Sam's IQ score				
3. Sam's math scores on a norm-referenced, multiple choice test				
4. Sam's math scores on the State Assessment				
5. One example of Sam's problem-solving ability on a math word problem				
6. Sam's psychological assessment results				
7. A portfolio of Sam's work in math				
8. Sam's self-report on his performance in math				
9. Sam's teachers assessment of his performance in math				
10. Sam's parents assessment of his performance in math				
Other?				

Handout

Mini-Lesson #10— Assessment Principles[1]



Purposes

- To examine beliefs that influence decisions which are made about assessment.
- To introduce the Five Keys to Quality Classroom Assessment.

Prerequisites

None. This is an introductory activity. In fact, it can be used to introduce the Keys to Quality Assessment.

Time 30-45 minutes

Focus

Key 1: What: Clear and appropriate targets. One of the assessment principles (#4) in this example specifies the need for clear and appropriate targets.

Key 2: Who: Clear and appropriate users and uses. Several of the assessment principles in this example (#1, 2, 8) discuss what the developers see as the major users and uses of assessment information.

Key 3: How: Target-method match. Two of the assessment principals in this example (#5, 9) discuss the need to match methods to targets and the need to use a variety of methods.

Key 4: How Much: Sampling. These principles only allude to sampling (#5).

Key 5: How Accurate: Eliminating possible sources of bias and distortion. Several assessment principals address issues of possible bias and distortion (#3, 6, 7, 8).

---

[1] Adapted from Laboratory Network Program, *Improving Classroom Assessment: A Toolkit for Professional Developers* (Activity 1.12). Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1998.

Materials

Handout:

- Assessment Principles (attached)

Overheads:

- Five Keys to Quality Assessment (**Appendix A**)
- Reflection on Principles (attached)

Facilitator's Outline

Introduction:

"We will review nine principles of assessment created by another group of teachers. You may agree with some and disagree with others. We'll examine them critically and use them to reflect on our own assessment beliefs."

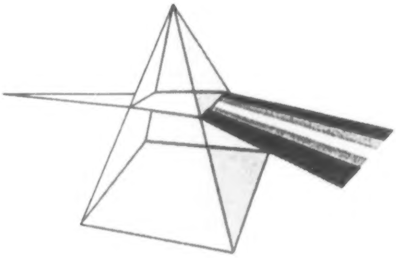
1. (10 minutes) Distribute the handout Assessment Principles and invite participants to read each principle critically.

2. (10-15 minutes) In small groups, use the three questions on the Reflection on Principles overhead to guide conversations regarding the principles.

3. (10-15 minutes) Ask the teachers to relate the Principles to the Five Keys for Quality Assessment (**Appendix A**). Which keys are covered well? Which keys are not?

4. (5 minutes) Ask teachers to write in their learning journal (or share with a partner) an assessment practice that they may modify in their classroom as a result of their analysis of these principles.

Reflecting on Principles



1. Which principles affirm your own beliefs?
2. Are there any that challenge your beliefs or experience? What concerns do you have?
3. What are implications of each principle for classroom action and decision making?
4. Which Keys to Quality Assessment are reflected in the various principals? Which keys are covered well? Which are not?

Overhead

Assessment Principles

1. Learners need to find out often how well they are doing and teachers need to find out how successfully they are teaching. Therefore, regular assessment of student progress and achievement is part of good teaching.

2. The main purpose of assessment is to help students learn. When students are assessed well and given feedback about their performance, they find out what they have learned successfully and what they have not. Any weaknesses can then be reduced.

3. Assessment tasks should be designed so that most children in a group do well on most tasks. This takes the threat out of being assessed, and allows children to be motivated to learn by the regular experience of success and praise.

4. Design/selection of assessment tasks requires a clear idea of the curriculum objectives. Children should only be assessed on knowledge, skills and attitudes their teacher has given them opportunities to develop, and each task should be well within the capabilities of most students.

5. No single method of assessment can give information about achievement of the full range of learning objectives. Therefore a combination of different methods is vital if we are to get a balanced picture of student development.

6. Assessment tasks must be presented in a way so that the student is perfectly clear about what is expected, and grades or marks awarded so that the student feels s/he has been fairly treated.

7. The language of assessment must match the language of instruction. If not, then assessment produces unfair and invalid results. Children must be fluent in the language in which they are to be assessed and the level of language used must match their stage of development.

8. The teacher's unbiased judgments are important in assessment, but students themselves can often be asked to assess their own level of achievement and the achievements of their classmates. They can be (surprisingly) accurate and honest.

9. Assessment should focus on each student's achievements independently of how other students are doing. Constant comparison/ competition with classmates can damage the self-esteem and self-confidence of many students.

Handout

Mini-Lesson #11—
Here Are the Assessment Results...
What Do We Do Next?

Purpose

To assist faculties to interpret and use the score reports from state or other large-scale standards-based assessments.

Rationale

Most states and districts ask or require that large-scale results be used to plan instructional priorities at the building level. This activity assists faculties to do this by building staff understanding of content standards and how they are measured by the assessment and then by interpreting and using the results from the assessment.

Rationale for the first part: It will be hard for teachers to take action based on the assessment results shown in one's score reports if they do not have a thorough understanding of local content standards. We are becoming more and more convinced that the biggest barrier to better assessment and use of results is clearly knowing what it is that's to be assessed. This is the whole basis for the standards-based education movement, including standards-based assessment. If, for example, teachers don't completely understand the knowledge and skills that underlie the reading content standards and assessment, how will they know what to change in instruction to build the skills that will enable students to read better and thus do better on the assessment? Taking the assessment themselves and engaging in the suggested discussion questions is a great way to build such familiarity.

Rationale for the second part: The second part of the activity asks teachers to review score reports and take action. Sometimes this action might be to try new instructional ideas. Sometimes this action might be to gather more data. This section is designed to be a discussion starter, not a conversation ender.

> Note from Bill Nutting: *We've used this with our [state assessment] results and it was a very helpful process.*

Prerequisites

This activity is most effective if teachers are already familiar with local content standards and state or district standards-based assessment. But, it can also be used as an entree into these topics. It also reinforces the notion of alignment between content standards, assessments, and classroom practice. The principal should be familiar with:

- Local content standards and standards-based assessment content
- How to interpret local standards-based assessment score reports
- How scoring took place and how standards were set on the local assessment
- Current status in development and use of the local assessment

Time

90 minutes

Focus

Key 1: What: Clear and appropriate student learning targets. The first part of the activity assists teachers to understand the nature of the learning targets they are to achieve with students.

Key 2: Who: Clear and appropriate users and uses. The second part of the activity exemplifies building planning as one use for results, and building staff as one set of users. It provides a strategy for clearly communicating assessment results for this use and these users.

Key 3: How: Target-method match. The activity illustrates how assessment, content standards, targets, and instruction can and should be aligned.

Materials

Handouts:

- Local content standards: frameworks, performance standards, benchmarks, or other documents, such as rubrics, that aim to describe, as thoroughly as possible, what it is students are to know and be able to do.
- Local score reports: plus any score report interpretation pamphlets that are available.
- The assessment itself, or released sample items that illustrate the content of the local assessment. Make copies so that teachers can actually take the test.

Overheads:

- Five Keys to Quality Assessment (**Appendix A**)
- Example Test Discussion Questions (attached)
- State Assessment Results Discussion Questions (attached)

Facilitator's Outline:

Introduction:

"There are many users and uses of assessment information. For the state or local assessment, one of the major uses is to provide information to building faculties to assist in planning school improvement efforts. This session begins that process." Indicate where this activity fits into the Five Keys To Quality Assessment (Keys #1, 2 and 3).

Part 1: Understanding the nature of the competencies students are to master

1a. If teachers have not already done so, now is a good time to have them take the assessment themselves. All teachers, administrators, and parents should do so. Since this might take quite a bit of time, you might want to focus on the sections that relate to areas on your building score report that might require attention. So, for example, if your score report indicates the lowest numbers of students meeting mastery on "non-fictional reading" and "communicating understanding" in math, you might have teachers take the reading and math portions of the assessment.

1b. When they are done with each section of the assessment, ask teachers to discuss the questions on the attached overhead—"Taking the Assessment" Discussion Questions. So, for example, discuss the questions after finishing the reading assessment, and again after other portions of the assessment are completed.

Discussion questions:

- General observations about the assessment. Harder or easier than past assessments? Same or different? Many times standards-based assessments are different because they have open-ended and extended-response questions as well as performance assessments. Teachers generally regard these assessments as being harder than the large-scale assessments used in the past.

- What skills and/or knowledge do these questions require on the part of the student? How well did the test developer match targets to methods? Open-ended questions and performance assessments frequently require more complicated skills and understanding than multiple choice or short answer. This is what makes them harder.

- Where do these skills and knowledge appear in the content standards, frameworks, or benchmarks? This allows teachers to connect the assessment to the standards.

  Advanced extension: Pass out scoring guides with right answers for multiple choice and rubrics for open ended, and have teachers trade papers and score their work. For the open-ended questions ask: "What is really assessed, that which the task requires or that which is scored by the rubric?" The answer is that which is scored by the rubric. In the final analysis it doesn't matter what the task requires students to do. What's assessed is what the rubric says to identify. Ask teachers to compare their match of task-to-standards to rubric-to-standards and note differences. This is a great discussion starter, but can put many beginning groups over the edge.

- What are the implications for instruction? You might phrase this as, "What would have to be done differently in instruction in order to enable students to develop the skills they need to do well on the test?" The goal is not to teach to the test, but to teach the skills, as expressed in the content standards, that the test is designed to assess. Another interesting way to say this is that the purpose of many of the new assessments is to have a test worth teaching to.

Part 2: Interpreting the score reports and taking action

2a. Pass out or show on an overhead the score report. Help teachers interpret this score report:

- Many score reports for standards-based assessments report average scores for a classroom or building and the percent of students meeting mastery or at different levels of it. You may need to explain how the performance standard (mastery level) was set.

- Be prepared to describe the difference between this criterion-referenced type of reporting and norm-referenced reporting. The former indicates how students do on mastering a prescribed set of skills. All students could meet mastery, or none could. The latter indicates how well students do compared to each other. Both types of scores are interesting, both are needed, and one isn't necessarily better than the other.

2b. Ask teachers to discuss this profile and list their questions. See the attached overhead Assessment Results Discussion Questions:

- Where are the students' relative strengths and weaknesses?
- Are there any surprises? If so, what? For example, why are the reading scores so low?
- What questions do you have? Typical questions: What are the quality of the questions and scoring? Can we believe these results? What accommodations were made for special populations? How many special education and/or ELL students are included? Does this test really measure what we teach?

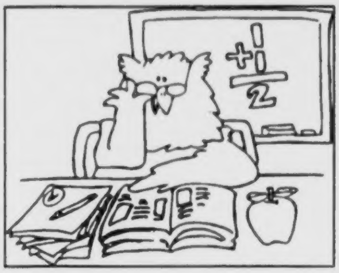
2c. Discuss their questions. Then discuss the implications of these results *and* their questions. Use the second group of questions on the overhead Assessment Results Discussion Questions.

- In which one or two areas should we place emphasis on this year? This is the instructional question. What do these results indicate that we need to work harder on next year?
- What additional information should we collect in order to fine tune our understanding of student strengths and weaknesses? This is especially important if teachers don't think the results are accurate. The obvious question is: "What are we going to collect that will be more accurate? Let's prove or disprove it. What's our plan?"
- How will we track student progress in our target areas so that we don't have to wait until the end of the next school year to see if our efforts are successful? Here we make the connection to classroom assessment. The plan of action might be to scout out assessments that teachers can use to continuously monitor student progress. A list of assessment resources is included in **Appendix C**.

2d. Now it's time to take action by making the link to instruction. See the final group of questions on the overhead Assessment Results Discussion Questions:

- What might we need to do differently in instruction to enable students to meet the standard on these assessments? This may lead to a professional development plan.
- How will we link our efforts across grade levels?

"Taking the Assessment" Discussion Questions



1. How does this assessment compare to past large-scale assessments?
2. What skills and/or knowledge do these questions require on the part of the student? How well did the test developer match assessment method to targets?
3. Where do these skills or knowledge appear in the content standards?
4. What are the implications for instruction?

Overhead

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Assessment Results Discussion Questions

Discuss the profile and list questions

- Where are students' relative strengths and weaknesses?
- Are there any surprises?
- What questions do you have?

What are the implications of these results?

- Which one or two areas should be emphasized this year?
- What additional information should we collect in order to fine tune our understanding of student strengths and weaknesses in these areas?
- How will we track student progress throughout the school year so we don't have to wait until next year to see how we did?

Linking to instruction

- What might be done differently in instruction to enable students to meet the standard on these assessments?
- How will we link our efforts across grade levels?

Overhead

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Mini-Lesson #12—
Working Backwards From Report Card to Teaching

Purpose

This exercise asks participants to reflect upon the alignment among grading, assessing, learning targets and teaching.

Rationale

This really isn't an exercise on grading and reporting. Rather, it uses grading as the jumping off point for a look into the way teachers align their report card grades with student learning targets, assessment and instruction.

Prerequisites

This *Mini-Lesson* should be used in the middle of study of assessment. Prerequisites would definitely be an overview of the Keys to Quality Assessment and a chance to think about one's own assessment practices and why there is attention on assessment right now (**Mini-Lessons #10**—*Assessment Principles* or **#16**—*Changing Assessment Practices*).

Time

45-60 minutes

Focus

Key 1: What: Clear and appropriate targets. In this activity, teachers are asked to tie assessment and instruction to student learning targets. Local content standards can be used as well as other teacher targets. If teachers have trouble with this activity, one reason might be that targets are not clear enough.

Key 3: How: Target-method match. This activity focuses on alignment of targets to assessment methods and instruction. Another reason teachers might have trouble with this activity is that they are uncertain about how they *do* assess student achievement.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Materials

Handout:

- Working Backwards (attached)
- Local content standards (or the default reading, oral communication and mathematics standards in **Appendix A**). A compendium of content standards for all content areas can be found at www.mcrel.org

Overhead:

- Five Keys to Quality Assessment (**Appendix A**)

Facilitator's Outline

Introduction:

"Since report cards can drive assessment, we will try working backwards from the report card to analyze alignment between reporting, assessment, content standards and teaching."

> Note from Bill Nutting: *I think one of the problems with using traditional report cards is that they frequently don't define a learning target very well. So, as a teacher begins this exercise, the important area they may list is something very general like "math." They may need to think about a more specific target, or maybe, the frustration from starting with "math" will cause teachers to work through that process. Possibly, they would discover why "math" as a target is problematic.*

1. (20-30 minutes) Ask teachers to fill out the first four rows in the attached Working Backwards grid. Row #3 asks for alignment with local content standards. If local content standards are not available, you can use the default standards in **Appendix A** for the areas of reading, oral communication, and mathematics.

2. (20-30 minutes) Ask teachers to analyze the match among curriculum and instruction, the learning targets, the assessment techniques and their reporting methods. Is there an appropriate connection among these areas? Which areas may need more attention to create a stronger connection? What might be done to strengthen the connection? Ask teachers to write responses in their learning journals.

3. (5-10 minutes) Relate this activity to the Keys of Quality Assessment (overhead in **Appendix A**). Ask teachers which keys are emphasized (Keys 1 and 3).

"Working Backwards" Grid

	Report Card Area #1	Report Card Area #2
1. Name an important area that you must report about on your report card.		
2. What assessment techniques do you use to collect information which aids reporting in that area?		
3. What content standards and/or other learning targets do you hope students will attain in this area?		
4. What curriculum and instructional strategies did you use to teach these learning targets?		
5. How do these align? What could be done to strengthen the connection?		

Handout

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Mini-Lesson #13—
Green Light, Red Flag

Purposes

- To practice revising classroom assessments by systematically applying the Five Keys to Quality Assessment
- To model the process by which criteria for quality are taught to students
- To give teachers a tool they can use to self-assess the quality of their own classroom assessments

Rationale

Teacher sharing of assessment techniques and dilemmas is a great way to build assessment literacy. This generic activity provides a group process for identifying assessment dilemmas and solutions. The analysis of dilemmas and solutions provides practice on applying the Five Keys to Quality Assessment to actual classroom assessment samples.

Method 1 focuses on dilemmas brought to the session by teachers.

Method 2 models the process by which teachers can teach criteria to students. We must practice what we preach. If we want students to self-assess, we must self-assess. If we want students to apply criteria to their own performance, then we must do so as well. We shouldn't ask students to do anything we haven't done ourselves.

In our case, each of the five keys can be thought of as a trait of quality assessments. Each of these traits has a rubric (Green Light, Red Flag in **Appendix B**) that can be used to judge the quality of an assessment on that trait. Several sample assessments are provided in **Appendix B** with scores and descriptions of why they received the scores they did. Teachers evaluate and revise the sample assessments trait-by-trait. Although three sample assessments are provided, the same sequence can be applied to samples that teachers bring in, like a peer-review process.

The materials and processes in this activity can also be used by teachers to track their own progress in assessment. Once teachers have had practice with critiquing the classroom assessments of others, they can begin to critique their own in order to improve them.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Prerequisites

This is an advanced level activity. Teachers should have sound knowledge of the Five Keys to Quality Assessment.

Time

Time varies depending on teacher familiarity with the Five Keys.

Focus

This *Mini-Lesson* focuses on all five keys. Rubrics are provided for evaluating the quality of a given assessment on each key. Sample assessments are provided that demonstrate a range of quality on each key. In a given session, the principal can decide to focus on an assessment dilemma, single key, or multiple keys, using either Method 1 or Method 2.

Key 1: What: Clear and appropriate target

Key 2: Who: Clear and appropriate users and uses

Key 3: How: Target-method match

Key 4: How Much: Sampling

Key 5: How Accurate: Eliminating possible sources of bias and distortion

Materials

Handouts:

- Green Light, Red Flag rubrics (**Appendix B**).
- Checklist of Assessment Quality (**Appendix B**).
- One or more sample classroom assessments (**Appendix B**) or sample assessments brought in by participants. Our running example below uses the Interview Assessment in **Appendix B.**
- The write-up of the quality of the Interview Assessment or other sample from **Appendix B.**
- Local content standards or the default ones in **Appendix A**. Content standards must match to the assessment being reviewed.

Overhead:

- Five Keys to Quality Assessment (**Appendix A**)

Facilitator's Outline

Method 1: Dilemma-Based

Introduction:

"We're going to try and solve assessment dilemmas that are actually occurring right now in your classrooms. We'll relate each dilemma to the Five Keys for Quality Assessment and then work together to solve the dilemma using our knowledge of sound assessment practices."

1. A teacher presents an assessment dilemma or situation for the group's consideration. For example, a dilemma might be, "How do I assess reading comprehension in a way that aligns with the state's content standards and assessments?"

2. The group assists with identifying the dilemma, focusing on potential assessment issues. The group identifies which of the Five Keys to Quality Assessment each issue represents. This gives teachers practice applying the concepts introduced in previous professional development. For our example, potential barriers include:

   - Key 1: Clear targets: do we understand the state's content standards in reading well enough to select or design an assessment that matches them?

   - Key 3: Target-method match: what is the best way to assess the reading content standards; do various content standards match better to different assessment methods?

   - Key 3: Target-method match: where are sources of assessment ideas and samples?

3. The group brainstorms solutions to this assessment situation. For our example, they might:

   - Review content standards to refine their knowledge of the targets

   - Look for sample assessments that might best match the targets

   - Analyze each sample for its technical strengths and weaknesses using the procedure in **Method 2**, below.

4. The group identifies "next step" options and assists the teacher in creating an action plan.

5. Teachers reflect on this conversation by writing in their assessment learning journals.

6. Time should be saved at future staff meetings for each assessment situation to be revisited.

Method 2: Assessment-Based

Introduction:

"The best way to learn about the characteristics of quality classroom assessments is to systematically analyze real examples. So, we are going to use criteria for each of the Five Keys to Quality Assessment to evaluate actual examples. Then we're going to revise each assessment key-by-key (trait-by-trait). This models the process by which criteria can be taught to students.

1. Distribute a copy of a classroom assessment to the group. For our running example we'll use the Interview Assessment in **Appendix B**.

2. Ask teachers to look through the sample assessment and jot down notes as to its quality. Use the Five Keys to Quality Assessment overhead in **Appendix A**, as needed, to assist teachers in knowing what to look for.

3. Pass out the Green Light/Red Flag handout in **Appendix B**. Ask the teachers to look at the trait Key 1: What: Clear and appropriate targets and note the assessment examples' strengths and weaknesses on this trait.

4. Ask participants to rate the assessment for clarity of targets on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is low and 5 is high. Ask participants to justify their scores using the Green Light/Red Flag rubric. Remember, there is no such thing as a right score only a justifiable one. Justify the score by citing evidence from the rubric.

5. Pass out the first page of the write-up that analyzes Interview Assessment for Clear Targets (**Appendix B**) and ask teachers to compare their evaluation of the assessment to the one provided. Note that each key/trait begins on a separate page to facilitate passing them out one by one. Where do they agree or disagree? It's okay to disagree as long as the opinion can be justified by reference to the rubric. The Interview Assessment is about a "4/5" on Clear Targets—the teacher has stated the targets and attempted to clarify them through rubrics.

6. Ask teachers what they might do to improve this assessment on the trait of clear targets. For Interview Assessment, the major things would be to put all the targets together in one place, specifically refer to the rubrics as a means of making the targets clear, and make sure that activities are not mixed up with targets.

7. Repeat this process for each of the other keys (traits). (For Interview Assessment: users and uses = 4/5; target-method match = 5; sampling = 3; bias and distortion = 4; overall = 4/5.

8. Ask teachers to reflect on the implications of what they have done for their own practice in assessment and write in their assessment learning journals.

Mini-Lesson #14—
Grading: The Issue Is Not How But Why[1]

Purpose

To kick off conversations about grading, reporting and assessment.

Rationale

Discussions about grading are more productive if teachers have something to react to, rather than just discussing grading in the abstract.

> Note from Bill Nutting: *We have used a couple of Kohn's articles over the years, including this one. The provocative nature of his positions and his arguments always fuels interesting discussions amongst staff members. Sometimes, making people angry inspired reflective thinking. And, there is always something that teachers can take away from reading his stuff, even if they disagree with some of it.*

Prerequisites

This *Mini-Lesson* can be used in the middle of assessment study. Minimum prerequisites would be an overview of the Keys to Quality Assessment and a chance to think about one's own assessment practices and why there is attention on assessment right now (**Mini-Lessons #10**—*Assessment Principles* or **#16**—*Changing Assessment Practices*)

Time 30-45 minutes. Teachers should read the article ahead of time.

Focus

Key 2: Who: Clear and appropriate users and uses. Kohn asks teachers to specifically question why they grade. What do they hope to accomplish with grading? Who are the users and uses of such information? Might there be a better way of delivering the needed information to the users? The paper also discusses what Kohn feels are the proper uses for assessment: to help students learn.

---

[1] Adapted from Laboratory Network Program, *Improving Classroom Assessment: A Toolkit for Professional Developers (Activity 4.2).* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1998

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Key 3: How: Target-method match. Kohn discusses the features of assessment that are more likely to assist learning.

Key 5: How Accurate: Eliminating possible sources of bias and distortion. Kohn discusses principles for grading, if one *must* grade. The intent is to use grading procedures that minimize unintentional negative side effects.

Materials

Handout:

- Article by Alfie Kohn ("Grading: The Issue Is Not How, but Why," *Educational Leadership, Vol. 52,* October 1994, pp. 38-41, attached)
- Kohn's World Discussion Questions (attached)

Overheads:

- Five Keys to Quality Assessment (**Appendix A**)
- Summary of Kohn's World (attached)

Facilitator's Outline

Introduction

Kohn's strong positions help us reflect upon our own beliefs and practices with assessment, grading, and reporting. Our goal is not necessarily to agree with all of his points, but rather to think critically about our classroom practices.

1. Ask teachers to read the article ahead of time, if possible.

2. (10-15 minutes) Review key elements from the article, using the Summary of Kohn's World overhead.

3. (15-30 minutes) Ask teachers to respond to the following questions from the Kohn's World Discussion Questions handout:

   - What should be the purpose of classroom assessment—grading or something else?
   - What is the most important idea from Kohn that you'd like to remember?
   - What do you do and what could you do to increase intrinsic motivation in your classroom?
   - What do you do and what could you do to increase a support-model classroom instead of a demand-model classroom?
   - What points did Kohn make that you disagreed with or that made you nervous?
   - What will you add or change in your assessment and/or grading practices after reading this article?

4. (5 minutes) Tie this activity back to the Five Keys to Quality Assessment using the overhead in **Appendix A** as needed. Emphasize that grades are only as good as the assessments on which they are based.

5. (5 minutes) Ask teachers to write in their assessment learning journal at least one thing they will try as the result of this *Mini-Lesson.*

Summary of Kohn's World

From the Introduction (p. 38)

Focus on the purpose of assessment, rather than merely the means

Three Rationales for Assessment Purposes (pp. 39-30)

1. Sorting
2. Motivation—extrinsic and intrinsic
3. Feedback

Demand Model and Support Model of Teaching and Learning & Assessment (pp. 39-40)

- Demand Model
- Support Model

Five Principles of Supportive Assessment (p. 40)

1. Assessment should not be overdone.
2. The best evidence of learning comes from observing children.
3. Transform schools into safe, caring communities.
4. Assessment must attend to the quality of the curriculum.
5. Students must be actively involved in the assessment process.

And If You Must Grade (pp. 40-41)

1. Refrain from grading individual assignments.
2. Don't grade while students are still learning.
3. Never grade on a curve.
4. Never give a separate grade for effort.

Overhead, p. 2

Kohn's World—Discussion Questions

• What should be the purpose of classroom assessment—grading or something else?	
• What is the most important idea from Kohn that you'd like to remember?	
• What do you do and what could you do to increase intrinsic motivation in your classroom?	
• What do you do and what could you do to increase a support-model classroom instead of a demand-model classroom?	
• What points did Kohn made that you disagreed with or that made you nervous?	
• What will you add or change in your assessment and/or grading practices after reading this article?	

Handout

Grading: The Issue Is Not How but Why

Alfie Kohn

Only by abandoning traditional grading and performance assessment practices can we achieve our ultimate educational objectives.

Why are we concerned with evaluating how well students are doing? The question of motive, as opposed to method, can lead us to rethink basic tenets of teaching and learning, and to evaluate what students have done in a manner more consistent with our ultimate educational objectives. But not all approaches to the topic result in this sort of thoughtful reflection. In fact, approaches to assessment may be classified according to their depth of analysis and willingness to question fundamental assumptions about how and why we grade. Consider three possible levels of inquiry:

Level 1. These are the most superficial concerns, those limited to the practical issue of *how* to grade students' work. Here we find articles and books offering elaborate formulas for scoring assignments, computing points, and allocating final grades—thereby taking for granted that what students do must receive *some* grades and, by extension, that students ought to be avidly concerned about the ones they will get.

Level 2. Here educators call the above premises into question, asking whether traditional grading is really necessary or useful for assessing students' performance. Alternative assessments, often designated as "authentic," belong in this category. The idea here is to provide a richer, deeper description of students' achievement. (Portfolios of students' work are sometimes commended to us in this context, but when a portfolio is used merely as a means of arriving at a traditional grade, it might more accurately be grouped under Level 1.)

Level 3. Rather than challenging grades alone, discussions at this level challenge the whole enterprise of assessment—and specifically why we are evaluating students as opposed to *how* we are doing so. No matter how elaborate or carefully designed an assessment strategy may be, the result will not be constructive if our reason for wanting to know how students are doing is itself objectionable.

Grading Rationale I: Sorting

One reason for evaluating students is to be able to label them on the basis of their performance and thus to sort them like so many potatoes. Sorting, in turn, has been criticized at each of the three levels, but for very different reasons. At Level 1, the concern is merely that we are not correctly dumping individuals into the right piles. The major problem with our high schools and colleges, the argument goes, is that they don't keep enough students off the Excellent pile. (These critics don't put it quite this way, of course; they talk about "grade inflation.") Interestingly, most studies suggest that student performance does not improve when instructors grade more stringently and, conversely, that making it relatively easy to get a good grade does not lead students to do inferior work—even when performance is defined as the number of facts retained temporarily as measured by multiple-choice exams (Vasta and Sarmiento 1979, Abrami et al. 1980).

At Level 2, questions are raised about whether grades are reliable enough to allow students to be sorted effectively. Indeed, studies show that any particular teacher may well give different grades to a single piece of work submitted at two different times. Naturally the variation is even greater when the work is evaluated by more than one teacher (Kirschenbaum et al. 1971). What grades offer is spurious precision, a subjective rating masquerading as an objective assessment.

From the perspective of Level 3, this criticism is far too tame. The trouble is not that we are sorting students badly—a problem that logically should be addressed by trying to do it better. The trouble is that we are sorting them at all. Are we doing so in order to segregate students by ability and teach them separately? The harms of this practice have been well established (Oakes 1985). Are we turning schools into "bargain-basement personnel screening agencies for business" (Campbell 1974, p. 145)? Whatever use we make of sorting, the process itself is very different from—and often incompatible with—the goal of helping students to learn.

Grading Rationale II: Motivation

A second rationale for grading—and indeed, one of the major motives behind assessment in general—is to motivate students to work harder so they will receive a favorable evaluation. Unfortunately, this rationale is just as problematic as sorting. Indeed, given the extent to which *A*'s and *F*'s function as rewards and punishments rather than as useful feedback, grades are counterproductive regardless of whether they are intentionally used for this purpose. The trouble lies with the implicit assumption that there exists a single entity called "motivation" that

Kohn's Article, p. 1, reprinted from *Educational Leadership* with permission of the author.

students have to a greater or lesser degree. In reality, a critical and qualitative difference exists between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivation—between an interest in what one is learning for its own sake, and a mindset in which learning is viewed as a means to an end, the end being to escape a punishment or snag a reward. Not only are these two orientations distinct, but they also often pull in opposite directions.

Scores of studies in social psychology and related fields have demonstrated that extrinsic motivators frequently undermine intrinsic motivation. This may not be particularly surprising in the case of sticks, but it is no less true of carrots. People who are promised rewards for doing something tend to lose interest in whatever they had to do to obtain the reward. Studies also show that, contrary to the conventional wisdom in our society, people who have been led to think about what they will receive for engaging in a task (or for doing it well) are apt to do lower quality work than those who are not expecting to get anything at all.

> Rather than challenging grades alone, we need to question the whole enterprise of assessment.

These findings are consistent across a variety of subject populations, rewards, and tasks, with the most destructive effects occurring in activities that require creativity or higher-order thinking. That this effect is produced by the extrinsic motivators known as grades has been documented with students of different ages and from different cultures. Yet the findings are rarely cited by educators.

Studies have shown that the more students are induced to think about what they will get on an assignment, the more their desire to learn evaporates, and, ironically, the less well they do. Consider these findings:

- On tasks requiring varying degrees of creativity, Israeli educational psychologist Ruth Butler has repeatedly found that students perform less well and are less interested in what they are doing when being graded than when they are encouraged to focus on the task itself (Butler and Nissan 1986; Butler 1987, 1988).
- Even in the case of rote learning, students are more apt to forget what they have learned after a week or so—and are less apt to find it interesting—if they are initially advised that they will be graded on their performance (Grolnick and Ryan 1987).
- When Japanese students were told that a history test would count toward their final grade, they were less interested in the subject—and less likely to prefer tackling difficult questions—than those who were told the test was just for monitoring their progress (Kage 1991).
- Children told that they would be graded on their solution of anagrams chose easier ones to work on—and seemed to take less pleasure from solving them—than children who were not being graded (Harter 1978).

As an article in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* concluded, "Grades may encourage an emphasis on quantitative aspects of learning, depress creativity, foster fear of failure, and undermine interest" (Butler and Nissan 1986, p. 215). This is a particularly ironic result if the rationale for evaluating students in the first place is to encourage them to perform better.

Grading Rationale III: Feedback

Some educators insist that their purpose in evaluating students is neither to sort them nor to motivate them, but simply to provide feedback so they can learn more effectively tomorrow than they did today. From a Level 2 perspective, this is an entirely legitimate goal—and grades are an entirely inadequate means of reaching it. There is nothing wrong with helping students to internalize and work toward meeting high standards, but that is most likely to happen when they "experience success and failure not as reward and punishment, but as information" (Bruner 1961, p. 26). Grades make it very difficult to do this. Besides, reducing someone's work to a letter or number simply is not helpful; a *B+* on top of a paper tells a student nothing about what was impressive about that paper or how it could be improved.

But from Level 3 comes the following challenge: *Why do we want students to improve*? This question at first seems as simple and bland as baby food; only after a moment does it reveal a jalapeño kick: it leads us into disconcerting questions about the purpose of education itself.

Demand vs. Support

Eric Schaps (1993), who directs the Developmental Studies Center in Oakland, California, has emphasized

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Kohn's Article, p. 2, reprinted from *Educational Leadership* with permission of the author.

"a single powerful distinction: focusing on what students ought to be able to do, that is, what we will demand of them—as contrasted with focusing on what we can do to support students' development and help them learn." For lack of better labels, let us call these the "demand" and "support" models.

In the demand model, students are workers who are obligated to do a better job. Blame is leveled by saying students "chose" not to study or "earned" a certain grade—conveniently removing all responsibility from educators and deflecting attention from the curriculum and the context in which it is taught. In their evaluations, teachers report whether students did what they were supposed to do. This mind-set often lurks behind even relatively enlightened programs that emphasize performance assessment and—a common buzzword these days—*outcomes*. (It also manifests itself in the view of education as an investment, a way of preparing children to become future workers.)

> The trouble is not that we are sorting students badly, the trouble is that we are sorting them at all.

The support model, by contrast, helps children take part in an "adventure in ideas" (Nicholls and Hazzard 1993), guiding and stimulating their natural inclination to explore what is unfamiliar; to construct meaning; to develop a competence with and a passion for playing with words, numbers, and ideas. This approach meshes with what is sometimes called "learner-centered learning," in which the point is to help students act on their desire to make sense of the world. In this context, student evaluation is, in part, a way of determining how effective *we* have been as educators. In sum, improvement is not something we require of students so much as something that follows when we provide them with engaging tasks and a supportive environment.

Supportive Assessment

Here are five principles of assessment that follow from this support model:

1. *Assessment of any kind should not be overdone.* Getting students to become preoccupied with *how* they are doing can undermine their interest in *what* they are doing. An excessive concern with performance can erode curiosity—and, paradoxically, reduce the quality of performance. Performance-obsessed students also tend to avoid difficult tasks so they can escape a negative evaluation.

2. *The best evidence we have of whether we are succeeding as educators comes from observing children's behavior* rather than from test scores or grades. It comes from watching to see whether they continue arguing animatedly about an issue raised in class after the class is over, whether they come home chattering about something they discovered in school, whether they read on their own time. Where interest is sparked, skills are usually acquired. Of course, interest is difficult to quantify, but the solution is not to return to more conventional measuring methods; it is to acknowledge the limits of measurement.

3. *We must transform schools into safe, caring communities.* This is critical for helping students to become good learners and good people, but it is also relevant to assessment. Only in a safe place, where there is no fear of humiliation and punitive judgment, will students admit to being confused about what they have read and feel free to acknowledge their mistakes. Only by being able to ask for help will they be likely to improve.

Ironically, the climate created by an emphasis on grades, standardized testing, coercive mechanisms such as pop quizzes and compulsory recitation, and pressure on teachers to cover a prescribed curriculum makes it more difficult to know how well students understand—and thus to help them along.

4. *Any responsible conversation about assessment must attend to the quality of the curriculum.* The easy question is whether a student has learned something; the far more important—and unsettling—question is whether the student has been given something worth learning. (The answer to the latter question is almost certainly no if the need to evaluate students has determined curriculum content.) Research corroborates what thoughtful teachers know from experience: when students have interesting things to do, artificial inducements to boost achievement are unnecessary (Moeller and Reschke 1993).

5. *Students must be invited to participate in determining the criteria by which their work will be judged, and then play a role in weighing their work against those criteria.* Indeed, they should help make decisions about as many elements of their learning as possible (Kohn 1993). This achieves several things: It gives them more control over their education, makes evaluation feel less punitive, and provides an important learning experience in itself. If there is a movement away from grades, teachers should explain the rationale and solicit students' suggestions for what to do instead and how to manage the transitional period. That transition may be bumpy and slow, but the chance to engage in personal and collective reflection about these issues will be important in its own right.

And If You Must Grade ...

Finally, *while conventional grades persist, teachers and parents ought to*

Kohn's Article, p. 3, reprinted from *Educational Leadership* with permission of the author.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

do everything in their power to help students forget about them. Here are some practical suggestions for reducing the salience.

■ *Refrain from giving a letter or number grade for individual assignments,* even if you are compelled to give one at the end of the term. The data suggest that substantive comments should replace, not supplement, grades (Butler 1988). Make sure the effect of doing this is not to create suspense about what students are going to get on their report cards, which would defeat the whole purpose. Some older students may experience, especially at first, a sense of existential vertigo: a steady supply of grades has defined them. Offer to discuss privately with any such student the grade he or she would probably receive if report cards were handed out that day. With luck and skill, the requests for ratings will decrease as students come to be involved in what is being taught.

■ *Never grade students while they are still learning something and, even more important, do not reward them for their performance at that point.* Studies suggest that rewards are most destructive when given for skills still being honed (Condry and Chambers 1978). If it is unclear whether students feel ready to demonstrate what they know, there is an easy way to find out: ask them.

■ *Never grade on a curve.* The number of good grades should not be artificially limited so that one student's success makes another's less likely. Stipulating that only a few individuals can get top marks regardless of how well everyone does is egregiously unfair on its face. It also undermines collaboration and community. Of course, grades of any kind, even when they are not curved to create artificial scarcity—or deliberately publicized—tend to foster comparison and competition, an emphasis on relative standing. This is not only destructive to students' self-esteem and relationships but also counterproductive with respect to the quality of learning (Kohn 1992).

As one book on the subject puts it: "It is not a symbol of rigor to have grades fall into a 'normal' distribution; rather, it is a symbol of failure—failure to teach well, to test well, and to have any influence at all on the intellectual lives of students" (Milton et al. 1986, p. 225).

■ *Never give a separate grade for effort.* When students seem to be indifferent to what they are being asked to learn, educators sometimes respond with the very strategy that precipitated the problem in the first place—grading students' efforts to coerce them to try harder. The fatal paradox is that while coercion can sometimes elicit resentful obedience, it can never create desire. A low grade for effort is more likely to be read as "You're a failure even at trying." On the other hand, a high grade for effort combined with a low grade for achievement says "You're just too dumb to succeed." Most of all, rewarding or punishing children's efforts allows educators to ignore the possibility that the curriculum or learning environment may have something to do with students' lack of enthusiasm. ■

References

Abrami, P. C., W. J. Dickens, R. P. Perry, and L. Leventhal. (1980). "Do Teacher Standards for Assigning Grades Affect Student Evaluations of Instruction?" *Journal of Educational Psychology* 72: 107–118.

Bruner, J. S. (1961). "The Act of Discovery." *Harvard Educational Review* 31: 21–32.

Butler, R. (1987). "Task-Involving and Ego-Involving Properties of Evaluation." *Journal of Educational Psychology* 79: 474–482.

Butler, R. (1988). "Enhancing and Undermining Intrinsic Motivation." *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 58 (1988): 1–14.

Butler, R., and M. Nissan. (1986). "Effects of No Feedback, Task-Related Comments, and Grades on Intrinsic Motivation and Performance." *Journal of Educational Psychology* 78: 210–216.

Campbell, D. N. (October 1974). "On Being Number One: Competition in Education." *Phi Delta Kappan*: 143–146.

Condry, J., and J. Chambers. (1978). "Intrinsic Motivation and the Process of Learning." In *The Hidden Costs of Rewards: New Perspectives on the Psychology of Human Motivation*, edited by M. R. Lepper and D. Greene. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Grolnick, W. S., and R. M. Ryan. (1987). "Autonomy in Children's Learning: An Experimental and Individual Difference Investigation." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 52: 890–898.

Harter, S. (1978). "Pleasure Derived from Challenge and the Effects of Receiving Grades on Children's Difficulty Level Choices." *Child Development* 49: 788–799.

Kage, M. (1991). "The Effects of Evaluation on Intrinsic Motivation." Paper presented at the meeting of the Japan Association of Educational Psychology, Joetsu, Japan.

Kirschenbaum, H., R. W. Napier, and S. B. Simon. (1971). *Wad-Ja-Get?: The Grading Game in American Education.* New York: Hart.

Kohn, A. (1992). *No Contest: The Case Against Competition.* Rev. ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Kohn, A. (September 1993). "Choices for Children: Why and How to Let Students Decide." *Phi Delta Kappan*: 8–20.

Milton, O., H. R. Pollio, and J. A. Eison. (1986). *Making Sense of College Grades.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Moeller, A. J., and C. Reschke. (1993). "A Second Look at Grading and Classroom Performance." *Modern Language Journal* 77: 163–169.

Nicholls, J. G., and S. P. Hazzard. (1993). *Education as Adventure: Lessons from the Second Grade.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Oakes, J. (1985). *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Schaps, E. (October 1993). Personal communication.

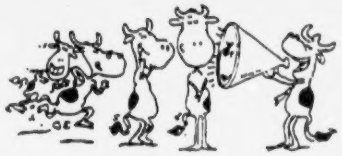
Vasta, R., and R. F. Sarmiento. (1979). "Liberal Grading Improves Evaluations But Not Performance." *Journal of Educational Psychology* 71: 207–211.

Copyright © 1994 by Alfie Kohn.

Alfie Kohn is the author of *Punished by Rewards: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise, and Other Bribes* (Houghton Mifflin). His address is 242 School St., Belmont, MA 02478.

Kohn's Article, p. 4, reprinted from *Educational Leadership* with permission of the autho

Mini-Lesson #15—What's Essential?[1]



Purposes

- To familiarize participants with local content standards
- To help participants differentiate between learning targets for students and the teaching activities used to help students achieve those targets

Rationale

Standards-based education requires that teachers have a sound understanding of the learning targets their students are to hit. Then instruction and assessment are focused on those targets. This requires a shift in thinking for many teachers, from an activities approach to an outcomes approach. Have you ever had a staff member who, when asked, "Why do you do this with students?" answers, "Because students think it's fun." In other words, they do the quilt activity, for example, because students enjoy it, but they can't say what learning targets are hit. An activities approach might look like this:

> *First I'll do my unit on igloos, then my unit on the way dinosaurs take care of their young, then my unit on how stars are formed, and finally the one on the local stream clean-up, if I have time. Students really enjoy those units and they learn a lot.*

An outcomes-based approached, on the other hand, might look like this:

> *In science, my major targets for students are critical thinking, being able and willing to answer questions that arise in daily life through an objective process of inquiry. My unit on igloos is fun for students, but it doesn't really get at those outcomes, so I'll skip it. My unit on the stream clean-up really promotes these skills, so I'll do it first.*

This *Mini-Lesson* has two parts. First, participants distinguish between activities and outcomes. Then, participants list the major outcomes they want for their students and how they will sequence learning activities to get students there.

> Note from Bill Nutting: *This activity is a recurring conversation through the observation process I conduct with classroom teachers. It seems to me that for principals, this lesson has a lot of potential benefit.*

---

[1] Adapted from an activity in the Washington State Commission on Student Learning's training module, *Becoming a Master of the Essential Learning Targets of Instruction,* February 1996.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Prerequisites

This *Mini-Lesson* can be used early in the study of assessment. Prerequisites would be an overview of the Keys to Quality Assessment and a chance to think about one's own assessment practices and why there is attention on assessment right now (**Mini-Lessons #10**—*Assessment Principles* or **#16**—*Changing Assessment Practices*).

Time

45-60 minutes

Focus

Key 1: What: Clear and appropriate targets. The first step in designing sound assessments is knowing what it is that one wants to assess. This activity is designed to assist teachers to think through what they want to accomplish with students and where in instruction it will be accomplished.

Materials

Handouts:

- My Most Important Targets (attached)
- Local content standards Or the defaults in **Appendix A** or relevant ones on www.mcrel.org. It's important that the content standards match up to the content area on which teachers will focus.
- Small Post-it® Notes.

Overheads:

- Five Keys to Quality Assessment (**Appendix A**)
- Activity or Outcome? (attached)
- Instructions (attached)
- What's Essential Discussion Questions (attached)

Facilitator's Outline

Introduction:

"Local content standards are a reality in our state (district). This activity will not only allow us to become more familiar with them, but also to understand the relationship between them and instruction."

Part A. The first part of the activity sets the stage for the second part by getting teachers to think beyond instructional activities. We want them to think about outcomes instead. What are their goals for students and what sequence of instructional activities will they use to get them there?

1. (5-10 minutes) Show teachers the overhead Activity or Outcome? and ask them to identify which are instructional activities and which are the outcomes we hope to achieve with students.
2. Transition to the next part of the activity which will allow them to continue to think about the outcomes/targets that are expected. It provides connections between the content standards and current classroom instructional practices.

Part B. The second part of the activity asks teachers to think about their major outcomes for students, and how these relate to local content standards and instruction.

1. (15-20 minutes) Give teachers the handout, My Most Important Targets. Using the Instructions overhead, ask them to individually identify five major goals or outcomes, in at least one content area, that they have for students. They should think about their most important goals for students—"What do you want students to still know and be able to do five years from now that comes from your time with them?" Ask teachers to compare their grids to local content standards. Where are the matches? Are there any mismatches? Why?
2. (20-30 minutes) Ask teachers to discuss the link to instruction using the What's Essential Discussion Questions overhead:
    a. How does this reflective process help you focus on appropriate targets for your learners? Typical responses: brought targets home to us; makes the content standards not so foreign; I am already doing lots of this; this is a little different way of thinking—from focusing on units to focusing on desired student learning; this is a self-evaluation tool—where am I with respect to the content standards?
    b. If these represent your targets for the whole year (or semester), what will you do in October, November, or December to ensure that students make it to the end of the year, or semester? What modifications to your instructional units might you make? Write your ideas in your assessment learning journal.
3. (5 minutes) Relate this *Mini-Lesson* to the Five Keys to Quality Assessment. (Use the overhead in **Appendix A**.) This *Mini-Lesson* relates to Key 1: Clear and appropriate learning targets as a necessary first step in designing assessments. We can't design an assessment if we don't know what it is we want to assess.

Activity or Outcome?

Can calculate area and perimeter

Critical-thinking skills

Research paper on an American president

Build a tube and tendon robot arm

Group skills

Persistence

Ability to write for various audiences and purposes

Build an igloo

Knowledge of facts about Alaskan history

Can read with comprehension

Design a quilt square

The significance of quilts

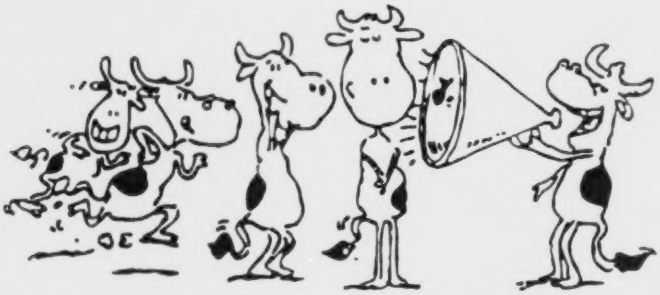
Synthesizing information

Finding information in a library

Read *Charlotte's Web*

Overhead

Instructions



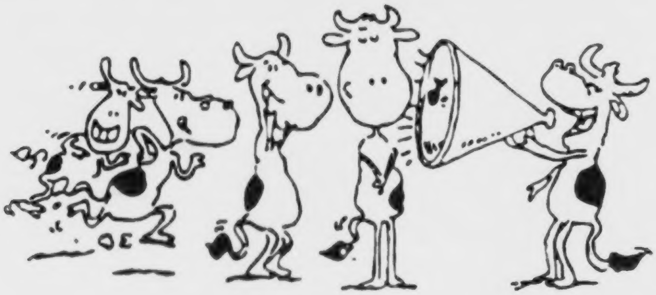
1. Focus on one discipline at a time.
2. Write one important learning goal per Post-it® Note and place it on the grid.
3. Repeat this process for the other disciplines.
4. Match your grid to the content standards.

Overhead

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

What's Essential?

Discussion Questions



1. How does this reflective process help you focus on appropriate targets for your learners?
2. If these represent your major targets for the whole year (or semester), what will you do in October, November, or December to ensure that students make it to the end of the year or semester? What modifications to your instructional units might you make?

Overhead

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

My Most Important Targets (Goals) for Students

	Target	Target	Target	Target	Target
Reading					
Communication					
Writing					
Math					
Other					

Handout

125

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

126

Mini-Lesson #16—
Changing Assessment Practices

Purpose

- To provide a format for teachers to self-assess their writing assessment and instruction skills
- To encourage teachers and their supervisors to talk about the support pieces that individual teachers, or teachers as a staff, need access to in order to implement the 6+1 Trait Writing Assessment Model
- To set goals and reasonable targets for growth in writing assessment and instruction

Rationale

Taking a look at the current status in writing assessment and instruction can provide a means for discussion and goal setting of how to move an individual or a group to a higher level of implementation. Because the tone of the Implementation Continuum is light, the degree of threat to the individual is low and hopefully their response will be honest and accurate. The continuum provides a vehicle to begin to answer the question, "How do we know where to go if we can't even tell you where we are?"

This continuum was developed by Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) Assessment and Evaluation staff and has been used with teachers and administrators at all levels, and in workshops and institutes around the world. It has been warmly received.

Prerequisites

None but a willingness to begin the adventure of 6+1 Trait Writing Assessment and instruction.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Time

20-30 minutes

Focus

- 6+1 Trait Writing Assessment Model
- Linking the writing traits to writing instruction for students at all levels of K-14

Materials

- Levels of Implementation of 6+1 Trait Writing Assessment and Instruction Continuum
- Optional: 6+1 Trait Writing Assessment Rubric (NWREL). A copy of this rubric can be found in **Mini-Lesson #8**—*A Success Story* or on the Internet at www.nwrel.org/eval/writing

Changing Assessment Practices in Writing Implementation Continuum

Using the Implementation Continuum provided, circle any of the descriptors which apply to you at this stage of you training or implementation of the 6+1 Trait Model for writing assessment and instruction. Feel free to mark any and all items in any column which describe you right now. You can jump around on the page if necessary or even add descriptors of your own.

Please note that the top level of each column deals mostly with assessment-related issues and the bottom half of each column applies more to implementation of the 6+1 Trait Model in the classroom.

After you finish, on a separate piece of paper, record any ideas you currently have about how you might move from your current position to the one adjacent on the right or even further. Additional training or resources? Mentoring? The opportunity to apply the rubric and rate papers with a partner? Observing another teacher teaching writing using the traits? Team collaboration to develop additional grade or context resources? Other?

When finished, set the implementation continuum aside so you can review it again later with your supervisor.

Facilitator's Outline

Introduction:

Teachers and administrators directly involved with implementing the 6+1 trait approach to writing assessment and instruction often ask how they can know that they or their staff are moving toward the mutual goal of full implementation. This rubric was designed as a tool to indicate some of the common observable features in a writing classroom so that teachers, colleagues, and their supervisors can establish a common ground for what their goals are and how far along they are in meeting those goals. By using this continuum, teachers can freely admit they don't have much knowledge or experience yet and ask for assistance. Administrators can provide access to support workshops, peer coaches, time to get organized, and observations of classrooms working on 6+1 traits as a means to encourage a teacher new to the process to develop and enhance their assessment and instructional skills.

Steps: (20-30 minutes)

1) Pass out a copy of the 6+1 Trait Writing Assessment Continuum for Assessment and Instruction.
2) Ask participants to circle any and all descriptors that currently apply to them.
3) Ask participants to make a list of all interventions they think would be helpful to move them to the next higher level on the continuum.
4) Brainstorm all the possible interventions, what resources are involved, and the amount of time reasonably expected to move a teacher from one level to the next.
5) Encourage participants to discuss their plans to improve their writing assessment skills with their supervisor and create an individual plan with goals and timelines.
6) At the end of the agreed upon timeline, participants and their supervisors meet again to see which goals have been met, how they know, and what new goals should now be created using the 6+1 Trait Writing Assessment Implementation Continuum.

Levels of Implementation of 6+1 Trait Writing Assessment and Instruction

Pre-Trait	**Trait Dabbler**	**Trait Trainee**	**Trait Trooper**	**Trait Master**
Six traits? Never heard of them!	I have had a 1-2 hour introduction to the traits, but I've never scored any papers.	I've had at least 5-6 hours of 6+1 trait assessment training.	I've had 10-12 hours of training and can hardly wait to do some more.	I've done so much of this that I can score papers at all different levels in my sleep!
Assessment makes me nervous; besides, it's very threatening to students.	*Sometimes I talk with my students about what is going to be graded on their papers.*	*I'm ready to score some papers from my own class and see if someone else agrees.*	*I'm regularly using the rubric to score student papers and am able to separate the traits in my mind.*	*I can't remember a time before I started using the traits.*
I don't have or use written criteria for my students' writing.	I can name the traits, but thoroughly defining them might be harder.	I've scored fewer than 20 papers on my own.	I'm comfortable with the language of the traits and use it as I work with students.	If my students disagree with my scores, they can explain their thinking by using the rubric.
Writing is too subjective; you can't define it with criteria.	*The 6+1 trait rubric is too long and complicated for me to use and understand.*	*I'm trying to assess using the traits, but I find myself still thinking about the paper as a whole.*	*My students have their own rubrics and are practicing self-evaluation, but they rely on my scores as the "right" scores.*	*I see the traits everywhere I go (I think I'm addicted...)*
I leave the assessment issues to experts; I don't see this influencing my teaching very much.	I have task-specific checklists that I often use to evaluate.	Many of my students' writing comes out looking the same.	Sometimes I assess for all six traits, but other times I focus on them separately or in pairs.	I can't keep up with my ideas to create new lessons.
My students spend less than 45 minutes a week on writing tasks.	*We spend about 45-75 minutes writing each week.*	*About 75-100 minutes a week is spent on writing in my classroom.*	*We spend a lot of time writing—100-120 minutes a week.*	*We write about everything, all the time, and at the drop of a hat!*

Pre-Trait	**Trait Dabbler**	**Trait Trainee**	**Trait Trooper**	**Trait Master**
My students are just as confused as I am about what good writing looks like.	I try to use the writing process, but the revision stage just doesn't seem to work in my class.	I'm trying out some of the revision and editing lessons from the handbook.	HELP! I have too much stuff! I'm going to throw extra things away!	I've got wonderful books in my car, closets, papers hanging out of files, my resources are limitless.
I've never gotten the hang of the writing process.	*My kids do what is asked of them—no more! (And some don't even do that!)*	*I've got to organize the stuff I have about the traits.*	*I'm building files around the traits from my own lessons.*	*Other people are coming to me for support and assistance with the traits and their teaching.*
I'm not completely clear about the difference between revision and the editing process.	The most frequent writing question asked by my students is "How long does it have to be?" followed by "Is this going to be graded?"	I'm doing what I learned at the workshop; sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't.	I rarely have to give kids ideas for writing—they keep writer's notebooks.	I participate on a committee or a support group for writing and the traits.
All of our writing comes from a text source and/or worksheets.	*I need more stuff if I'm going to try this!*	*My students are writing more, but many still want me to tell them what to say.*	*I'm starting to use pre- and post-assessments to set writing goals for students.*	*My students are teaching other students and their parents about the traits.*
		We pretty much focus on just stories or essays at my grade level.	Reading/writing workshop is part of our language experience.	The traits are the common thread that ties our writing program together.
		I'm still the primary editor for my students' work.	*I am designing my own revision and editing lessons which fit into my curriculum.*	*In my classroom, students have learned that writing is a way to think aloud on paper.*
		You can see most of the steps of the writing process in my classroom.		Revision doesn't scare any of us anymore!

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Mini-Lesson #17—Teacher Self-Assessment: View From the Classroom

Purposes

- To model self-assessment through the use of developmental continuums
- To develop understanding of the Five Keys to Quality Assessment
- To track teacher learning on assessment

Rationale

We must practice what we preach. If we want students to self-assess, we must self-assess. If we want students to apply criteria to their own performance, then we must do so as well. We shouldn't ask students to do anything we haven't done ourselves.

Likewise, as administrators we shouldn't ask teachers to do anything we haven't done. If we want teachers to define criteria for quality and use them with students, we need to provide teachers with criteria for the quality of their work. The developmental continuums in **Appendix D** are designed to do just that.

Prerequisites

This is an advanced activity. Teachers need some practice with the Five Keys to Quality Assessment and some confidence building in assessment before they tackle the self-evaluation.

Of course, there is always the argument that any learner needs to know the targets they are expected to hit in advance of instruction. The developmental continuums in **Appendix D**, as do any good performance criteria or rubrics, provide a very clear picture of what teachers need to know and be able to do with respect to good quality classroom assessment. One might, therefore, use these continuums at the beginning of assessment study and several times throughout assessment study to promote teacher self-evaluation of progress.

It's your call which will be most productive for your teachers. Part of the decision might rest with the amount of trust you have established with your teachers.

Time

15-20 minutes

Focus

All Five Keys to Quality Assessment. The continuums define what teachers should know and be able to do with respect to each key.

Materials

Handout:

- Developmental Continuums (**Appendix D**)

Overheads:

- Five Keys to Quality Assessment (**Appendix A**)
- Self-Assessment Discussion Questions (attached)

Facilitator's Outline

Introduction:

The introduction will vary depending on how the developmental continuums will be used. If used as a pretest and posttest, you might say:

"We're going to embark on a course of study of sound assessment practices. During this process we're not only going to study sound assessment, we're going to self-assess progress in various ways. This models what we want students to do. To self-assess, it helps to have a set of criteria (rubrics) that define what it is you need to know and be able to do. I'm going to provide you with such a set of developmental continuums to evaluate where you are now and your development as we progress with our study of assessment. You don't need show the results to anyone."

If used more at the middle or end of assessment study, you might say:

"Now that we've had a chance to study the Five Keys to Quality Assessment, we're going to model what we want students to do—self-assess their own status and progress. I'm going to give you a set of developmental continuums, one for each key. They describe four levels of development from "skilled" to "pre-aware" on each key. I'll give you a chance to self-assess (again, you don't need to show the results to anyone else) and then we'll discuss the continuums."

1. (10 minutes) Pass out the Developmental Continuums from **Appendix D**, one for each Key to Quality Assessment. Ask teachers to self-assess their status.

2. (10 minutes) Ask the teachers to critique the Developmental Continuums using the Discussion Questions overhead.

3. Remind teachers that the continuums will be periodically revisited in order to track learning progress.

Self-Assessment

Discussion Questions

1. Does anything surprise you on these continuums?
2. How well do you think these continuums describe what a skilled student assessor knows and can do?
3. How do these continuums reflect the integration of assessment and instruction?
4. What else might you add to these continuums?

Overhead

Mini-Lesson #18—Hey, These Targets Aren't as Clear as We Thought[1]

Purposes

- To consider different kinds of learning targets for students
- To consider what a good mix of learning targets for students might be
- To become familiar with local content standards
- To experience how frequently learning targets for students that we thought were clear really aren't

Rationale

This activity makes several points, so there are several rationales for it.

Rationale #1: State and local content standards are intended to clarify targets so that instruction across the system is focused on what is important. We've found that it is most meaningful to teachers to have them list their goals first so that they can see that the state or district content standards represent what they already value for their students. This activity relies on this method.

Rationale #2: We are coming to the conclusion more and more that the single biggest barrier to improving classroom assessment has nothing to do with the physical aspects of assessment at all (such as selecting the correct assessment method, making sure that there is only one correct answer, etc.). The biggest barrier is not having clear learning targets for students. One can't assess (or teach) something if one doesn't know with clarity what it is they are trying to assess (or teach).

For example, every set of content standards we've seen includes critical thinking. Well, what does that mean? What does a person look like when they are thinking critically? What does such a person know and what is such a person able to do? Likewise, what is communication in math, quality writing, or life-long learning? How do educators know when students are doing them well? How do educators know when students are developing adequately toward proficiency? This activity is only the opening gambit on this issue.

---

[1] Adapted from Laboratory Network Program, *Improving Classroom Assessment: A Toolkit for Professional Developers* (Activity 1.2). Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1998.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Rationale #3: One reason that targets tend to be unclear is that, in the past, many teachers have had an activities focus to instruction rather than an outcomes focus. What we're trying to do here is to assist teachers to change their focus from task to targets. This is not meant to disparage teachers; the importance of change in focus—to a standards-based approach to instruction—is only now becoming apparent.

Note from Bill Nutting: *I agree that the biggest barrier to effective assessment practices (and effective instructional practices) is unclear targets. This lesson would cause participants to reflect upon that Key to Quality Assessment in both general ways with generic targets, and in specific ways, with their own learning targets.*

Prerequisites

This *Mini-Lesson* can be used early on in the study of assessment. Prerequisites might be an overview of the Keys to Quality Assessment and a chance to think about one's own assessment practices and why there is attention on assessment right now (**Mini-Lesson #10**—*Assessment Principles* or **Mini-Lesson #16**—*Changing Assessment Practices*).

Time

40-60 minutes

Focus

Key 1: What: Clear and appropriate learning targets. This activity asks participants to try and classify learning targets for students to demonstrate the unclarity inherent in most of our outcomes statements.

Materials

Handouts:

- Kinds of Achievement Targets (attached)
- Examples of Learning Targets (attached)
- What Types of Student Learning Targets Are These? (attached)

Overheads:

- Five Keys to Quality Assessment (**Appendix A**)
- Kinds of Achievement Targets (attached)

Facilitator's Outline

Introduction:

"The first step in designing any assessment is to have clear and appropriate learning targets for students. Educators can't assess something if they don't know what it is. Further, lots of learning targets for students are unclear—teachers disagree on what they mean. This activity provides an opportunity to experience what unclarity is like." Use the overhead Five Keys to Quality Assessment (**Appendix A**) to show participants the focus of this activity.

1. (5-10 minutes) Ask participants to individually list their learning goals for students. Use whatever language they are most familiar with: student learning outcomes, goals, content standards or, merely, "What would you like students to know and be able to do when they leave your class?" Then ask participants to prioritize the top 5.

2. (5 minutes) Make a list of outcomes on a blank transparency or flip-chart paper. An efficient way to do this is to randomly select 15 people and ask them to read the top item on their list. Then ask if anyone has any other items that *must* be added.

3. (5 minutes) Show the overhead Kinds of Achievement Targets and give participants the handout Kinds of Achievement Targets. Describe the various types and show how the list generated by participants corresponds to the categories.

4. (15 minutes) Pass out a part of the state/local content standards, or course achievement targets, on which you'd like to focus. Ask participants to classify several targets. Or, use the handout What Types of Student Learning Targets Are These?

   Participants will often begin to quibble as to the correct classification. This occurs because people interpret the outcome differently; in other words, it is not clear what the standard means. This actually brings home the message of the entire segment—if educators don't agree on what targets mean, how can they exert a concerted effort to assist students to reach them? And, if educators don't agree on what targets mean, classroom assessments will look quite different.

   In *every* situation where we've asked participants to look at local content standards or course outcomes and explain what they mean, there have been differences of opinion. Adopted standards, as well as everyday course outcomes, are likely to contain ambiguities. Therefore, district administrators and teachers have to come to consensus on their meaning by openly discussing various interpretations, agreeing on their breadth and depth. Rather than being an occasion for despair, many educators have told us that such

Caution

Affective targets may be a red flag to some community members. If so, the entire activity can be done merely with cognitive targets. Simply remove all mention of the affective domain on all handouts and overheads.

discussions are invaluable for influencing instruction, helping teachers feel more in control, and developing the right assessment.

6. (15 minutes, optional) If participants are looking at their local or course outcomes, ask them to decide if they have a good mix of types. What would a good mix look like?
7. (5 minutes, optional) Show an analysis of the learner targets in a textbook (Examples of Learning Targets). Searching through this particular textbook resulted in only two reasoning targets, and these were in the expanded activities. The point: it was hard to find reasoning and product targets, so if teachers are counting on the textbook to match important learning outcomes, it could be misplaced trust.

Kinds of Achievement Targets

- **Master factual and procedural *knowledge***
- **Use knowledge to *reason* and solve problems**
- **Demonstrate mastery of specific *skills***
- **Create quality *products***
- **Acquire positive *affect/dispositions***

Adapted from Rick Stiggins, Assessment Training Institute, Portland, OR, 1995

Overhead

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Kinds of Achievement Targets

Master Factual and Procedural *Knowledge*

- Some to be learned outright
- Some to be retrieved using reference materials

Use Knowledge to *Reason* and Solve Problems

- Critical thinking
- Problem solving
- Decisionmaking
- Analytical, comparative, inferential, and/or evaluative reasoning

Demonstrate Mastery of Specific *Skills*

- Speaking a second language
- Giving an oral presentation
- Working effectively on a team
- Science process skills

Create Quality *Products*

- Writing samples
- Term projects
- Artistic products
- Research reports
- Shop projects

Acquire Positive *Affect/Dispositions*

- Positive self-concept
- Desire to learn/read/think critically
- Positive attitude toward school
- Good citizenship
- Respect toward self and others
- Flexibility
- Perseverance

Adapted from Rick Stiggins, Assessment Training Institute, Portland, OR, 1995

Handout

Examples of Learning Targets

Taken from the fourth-grade social studies text *Discovering Washington.* (From Jan Chappuis, Central Kitsap School District, Silverdale, WA, 1996.)

Knowledge Targets (factual)

- Name at least two regions of which Washington is a part.
- Tell at least one way that location has affected Washington's history.
- Name five main parts of Washington state and describe key land and water forms of each.
- Define the term *natural resources* and give examples of those found in Washington.

Examples of key words: tell, understand, name, describe, list, identify, give examples

Knowledge Targets (procedural)

- How to use map scales to measure distances.
- How to use latitude and longitude to locate places on a map or globe.

Examples of key words: how to (followed by some procedure)

Reasoning Targets

- Give examples of differences between coastal and plateau cultures and relate these to differences in the natural environment.
- Compare/contrast the pioneer way of life to their own.

Examples of key words: Classify, compare, contrast, analyze, synthesize, determine, evaluate, justify, construct support, draw conclusions

Skill Target

- Use map scales to measure distances.

Examples of key words: read, speak, assemble, operate, use, demonstrate

Product Target

- Make a relief map of any region of whole state, or make maps of products, points of interest, or land uses.

Examples of key words: create, design, make, produce, write, draw

Handout

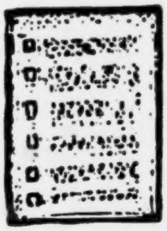
What Types of Student Learning Targets Are These?

Instructions: Match the student learning targets on the right to Rick Stiggins' five types of learning outcomes on the left. There are no single correct answers, however, some responses are better than others. The important thing is to explain *why* you have categorized the target as you have.

Type of Learning Outcome	Student Learning Targets
a. Knowledge	1. Writes effectively for various audiences and purposes
b. Reasoning/Thinking	2. Develops knowledge and understanding of how language is used
c. Skills/Behaviors	3. Contributes productively to both large and small groups
d. Products	4. Uses historical and contemporary information to demonstrate cross-cultural understanding
e. Affect/Dispositions	5. Demonstrates knowledge of melody, rhythm, harmony, pitch, form, timbre, and tone quality
	6. Uses music vocabulary correctly
	7. Exhibits self-confidence, self-discipline, and self-motivation
	8. Develops a personal wellness plan that recognizes the impact of nutrition and fitness on personal well-being
	9. Chooses and devises appropriate strategies to solve mathematical problems
	10. Views self as capable of using mathematical skills and knowledge to make sense of new problem situations

Handout

Appendix A
Overheads and Handouts Used in Several Mini-Lessons



Five Keys to Quality Assessment—Handout

Five Keys to Quality Assessment—Overhead

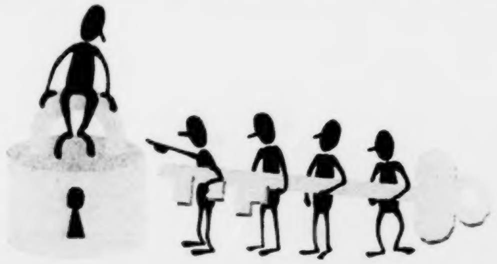
Sample Reading Content Standards (McREL*)

Sample Oral Communication Content Standards (McREL*)

Sample Mathematics Content Standards (McREL*)

* Used by permission. For a synthesis of content standards from additional content areas, see: www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/

Five Keys to Quality Assessment*



Sound Assessments:

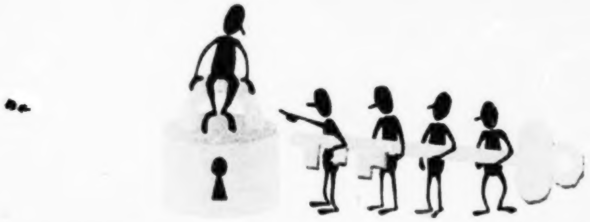
- **Arise from clear and appropriate student achievement targets**. *What* are we trying to assess? We must clearly and completely define achievement expectations, and these must be couched in the best current understanding of the discipline.
- **Serve a focused purpose.** *Why* are we assessing these targets? Who will use the results and what will they be used for?
- **Rely on a proper method.** *How* will we assess the achievement targets? Will these methods accurately reflect the achievement targets?
- **Sample student achievement appropriately.** *How much* will we collect? Can we be confident that results really reflect what a student knows and can do?
- **Eliminate bias and distortion.** *How accurate?* Did we really assess what we thought we were assessing? Is there anything in the way an achievement target is assessed that masks the true ability of a student or group of students? For example, too much reading on a math test.

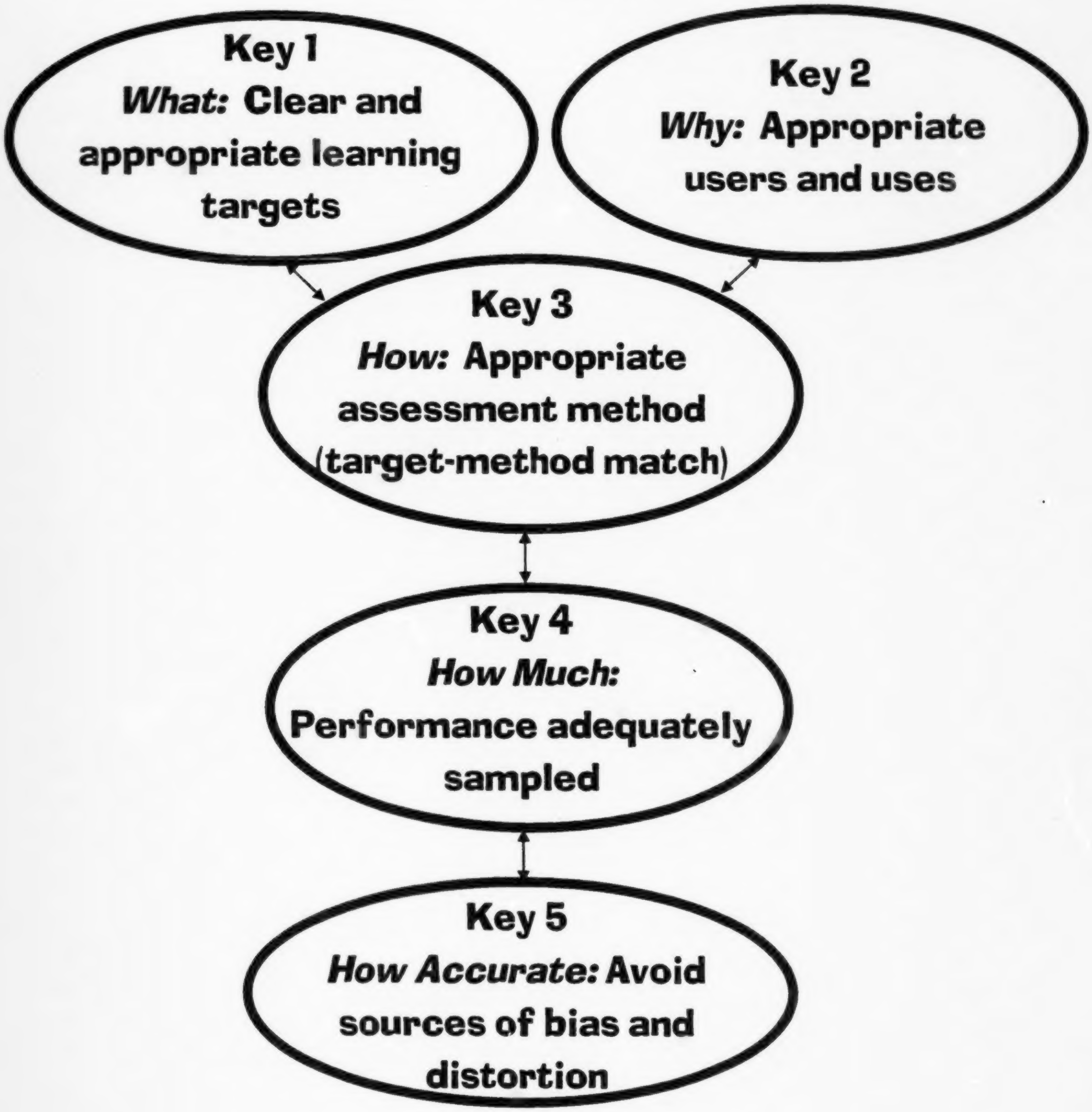
---

*Adapted from Rick Stiggins, *Student Centered Classroom Assessment,* Prentice-Hall, 1997, pp. 14-17 and earlier work by Rick Stiggins at NWREL.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Five Keys to Quality Assessment





Key 1
What: Clear and appropriate learning targets

Key 2
Why: Appropriate users and uses

Key 3
How: Appropriate assessment method (target-method match)

Key 4
How Much: Performance adequately sampled

Key 5
How Accurate: Avoid sources of bias and distortion

Language Arts

Standard: 5

Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the reading process

○ *AED: English - A Curriculum Profile for Australian Schools*, pp.8, 9 (Implied)
○ *New Standards: Elementary School*, pp.2, 3E, 20 ()
○ *NCTE: Standards in Practice: K-2*, pp.2, 3, 4E, viii ()
○ *NCSS: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies*, p. 148 (Explicitly stated)
○ *Texas: English Language Arts and Reading*, pp.1, 14, 29 (Explicitly stated)
○ *Board of Education, Commonwealth of Virginia: Standards of Learning*, p. 59 (Explicitly stated)

- Internet Connections - Language Arts

Level I: Primary (Grades K-2)

Understands that print conveys meaning

Understands how print is organized and read (e.g., identifies front and back covers, title page, and author; follows words from left to right and from top to bottom; recognizes the significance of spaces between words)

Creates mental images from pictures and print

Uses picture clues and picture captions to aid comprehension and to make predictions about content

Decodes unknown words using basic elements of phonetic analysis (e.g., common letter/sound relationships) and structural analysis (e.g., syllables, basic prefixes, suffixes, root words)

Uses a picture dictionary to determine word meaning

Uses self-correction strategies (e.g., searches for cues, identifies miscues, rereads)

Reads aloud familiar stories, poems, and passages with attention to rhythm, flow, and meter

Level II: Upper Elementary (Grades 3-5)

Previews text (e.g., skims material; uses pictures, textual clues, and text format)

Establishes a purpose for reading

Represents concrete information (e.g., persons, places, things, events) as explicit mental pictures

Makes, confirms, and revises simple predictions about what will be found in a text

Decodes words not recognized immediately by using phonetic and structural analysis techniques, the syntactic structure in which the word appears, and the semantic context surrounding the word

Decodes unknown words using a variety of context clues (e.g., draws on earlier reading, reads ahead)

Determines the meaning of unknown words using a glossary, dictionary, and thesaurus

Monitors own reading strategies and makes modifications as needed (e.g., recognizes when he or she is confused by a section of text, questions whether the text makes sense)

Adjusts speed of reading to suit purpose and difficulty of the material

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Identifies the author's purpose (e.g., to persuade, to inform)

Level III: Middle School/Jr. High (Grades 6-8)

Generates interesting questions to be answered while reading

Establishes and adjusts purposes for reading (e.g., to understand, interpret, enjoy, solve problems, predict outcomes, answer a specific question, form an opinion, skim for facts)

Represents abstract information (e.g., concepts, generalizations) as explicit mental pictures

Uses a variety of strategies to define and extend understanding of word meaning (e.g., applies knowledge of word origins and derivations, analogies, idioms, similes, metaphors)

Uses specific strategies to clear up confusing parts of a text (e.g., pauses, rereads the text, consults another source, draws upon background knowledge, asks for help)

Identifies specific devices an author uses to accomplish his or her purpose (e.g., persuasive techniques, style, literary form)

Reflects on what has been learned after reading and formulates ideas, opinions, and personal responses to texts

Level IV: High School (Grades 9-12)

Determines figurative, idiomatic, and technical meanings of terms through context

Extends general and specialized reading vocabulary (e.g., meaning of codes, symbols, abbreviations, and acronyms)

Uses a range of automatic monitoring and self-correction methods (e.g., rereading, slowing down, subvocalizing)

Recognizes the effectiveness of writing techniques in accomplishing an author's purpose

Understands influences on a reader's response to a text (e.g., personal values, perspectives, and experiences)

Represents key ideas and supporting details in outline or graph form

Identifies and analyzes the philosophical assumptions and basic beliefs underlying an author's work

Go to Standards Search page.

Go to Content Knowledge home page.

[Content Knowledge Home Page | Browse Content Knowledge | Search Content Knowledge | McREL Home Page]

Unless otherwise specified, all pages and information at this site are Copyright © 1996, 1997 McREL.

01-September-97
webmaster@mcrel.org

Language Arts

Standard: 6

Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies for reading a variety of literary texts

○ *New Standards: Elementary School*, pp.2, 3E, 20 ()
○ *NCTE: Standards in Practice: K-2*, pp.2, 3, 4E, viii ()
○ *NCSS: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies*, p. 148 (Explicitly stated)
○ *Texas: English Language Arts and Reading*, pp.1, 14, 29 (Implied)
○ *Board of Education, Commonwealth of Virginia: Standards of Learning*, p. 59 (Explicitly stated)

- Internet Connections - Language Arts

Level I: Primary (Grades K-2)

Applies reading skills and strategies to a variety of familiar literary passages and texts (e.g., fairy tales, folktales, fiction, nonfiction, legends, fables, myths, poems, picture books, predictable books)

Identifies favorite books and stories

Identifies setting, main characters, main events, and problems in stories

Makes simple inferences regarding the order of events and possible outcomes

Identifies the main ideas or theme of a story

Relates stories to personal experiences

Level II: Upper Elementary (Grades 3-5)

Applies reading skills and strategies to a variety of literary passages and texts (e.g., fairy tales, folktales, fiction, nonfiction, myths, poems, fables, fantasies, historical fiction, biographies, autobiographies)

Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of literary forms and genres (e.g., fairy tales, folktales, fiction, nonfiction, myths, poems, fables, fantasies, historical fiction, biographies, autobiographies)

Selects reading material based on personal criteria (e.g., personal interest, knowledge of authors and genres, text difficulty, recommendations of others)

Understands the basic concept of plot

Identifies similarities and differences among literary works in terms of settings, characters, and events

Makes inferences regarding the qualities and motives of characters and the consequences of their actions

Understands simple dialogues and how they relate to a story

Identifies recurring themes across literary works

Makes connections between characters or simple events in a literary work and people or events in his or her own life

Shares responses to literature with peers

Level III: Middle School/Jr. High (Grades 6-8)

Applies reading skills and strategies to a variety of literary passages and texts (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, myths, poems, fantasies,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

biographies, autobiographies, science fiction, tall tales, supernatural tales)

Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of literary forms and genres (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, myths, poems, fantasies, biographies, autobiographies, science fiction, tall tales, supernatural tales)

Identifies specific questions of personal importance and seeks to answer them through literature

Recognizes complex elements of plot (e.g., cause-and-effect relationships, conflicts, resolutions)

Recognizes devices used to develop characters in literary texts (e.g., character traits, motivations, changes, and stereotypes)

Makes inferences and draws conclusions about story elements (e.g., main and subordinate characters, events, setting, theme, missing details)

Understands complex, extended dialogues and how they relate to a story

Recognizes the use of specific literary devices (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback, progressive and digressive time, suspense, figurative language, description, metaphor)

Understands the effects of the author's style on a literary text (e.g., how it elicits an emotional response from the reader)

Identifies point of view in a literary text (e.g., distinguishes between first and third person)

Explains how the motives of characters or the causes for complex events in texts are similar to and different from those in his or her own life

Understands that people respond differently to literature

Level IV: High School (Grades 9-12)

Applies reading skills and strategies to a variety of literary texts (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, myths, poems, biographies, autobiographies, science fiction, supernatural tales, satires, parodies, plays, American literature, British literature, world and ancient literature)

Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of literary forms and genres (e.g.,fiction, nonfiction, myths, poems, biographies, autobiographies, science fiction, supernatural tales, satires, parodies, plays, American literature, British literature, world and ancient literature, the Bible)

Analyzes the effectiveness of complex elements of plot (e.g., time frame, cause-and-effect relationships, conflicts, resolutions)

Identifies the simple and complex actions (e.g., internal/external conflicts) between main and subordinate characters in texts containing complex character structures

Recognizes archetypes and symbols across literary texts (e.g., heroes, beneficence of nature, "dawn")

Makes connections among literary works based on theme (e.g., universal themes in literature of different cultures, major themes in American literature)

Understands the effects of complex literary devices and techniques on the overall quality of a work (e.g., tone, irony, mood, figurative language, allusion, diction, dialogue, symbolism, point of view, style)

Understands historical and cultural influences on literary works

Makes abstract connections between his or her own life and the characters, events, motives, and causes of conflict in texts

Relates personal response to the text with that seemingly intended by the author

Go to Standards Search page.

Go to Content Knowledge home page.

Language Arts

Standard: 7

Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies for reading a variety of informational texts

---

○ *NAEP: 1992 Reading Assessment*, p. 4 (Implied)
○ *New Standards: Elementary School*, pp.2, 31, 20 ()
○ *NCTE: Standards in Practice K-2*, pp.2, 3, 41, viii ()
○ *Texas: English Language Arts and Reading*, pp.1, 14, 29 (Implied)
○ *Board of Education, Commonwealth of Virginia: Standards of Learning*, p. 59 (Implied)

- Internet Connections - Language Arts

Level I: Primary (Grades K-2)

Applies reading skills and strategies to a variety of informational books

Understands the main idea of simple expository information

Summarizes information found in texts (e.g., retells in own words)

Relates new information to prior knowledge and experience

Level II: Upper Elementary (Grades 3-5)

Applies reading skills and strategies to a variety of informational texts (e.g., textbooks, biographical sketches, letters, diaries, directions, procedures, magazines)

Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of informational texts (e.g., textbooks, biographical sketches, letters, diaries, directions, procedures, magazines)

Uses text organizers (e.g., headings, topic and summary sentences, graphic features) to determine the main ideas and to locate information in a text

Identifies and uses the various parts of a book (index, table of contents, glossary, appendix) to locate information

Summarizes and paraphrases information in texts (e.g., identifies main ideas and supporting details)

Uses prior knowledge and experience to understand and respond to new information

Identifies the author's viewpoint in an informational text

Level III: Middle School/Jr. High (Grades 6-8)

Applies reading skills and strategies to a variety of informational texts (e.g., textbooks, biographical sketches, letters, diaries, directions, procedures, magazines, essays, primary source historical documents, editorials, news stories, periodicals, bus routes, catalogs)

Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of informational texts (e.g., textbooks, biographical sketches, letters, diaries, directions, procedures, magazines, essays, primary source historical documents, editorials, news stories, periodiocals, bus routes, catalogs)

Summarizes and paraphrases complex, explicit hierarchic structures in informational texts

Identifies information-organizing strategies that are personally most useful

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Uses new information to adjust and extend personal knowledge base

Identifies techniques used to convey viewpoint (e.g., word choice, language structure, context)

Seeks peer help to understand information

Draws conclusions and makes inferences based on explicit and implicit information in texts

Differentiates between fact and opinion in informational texts

Level IV: High School (Grades 9-12)

Applies reading skills and strategies to a variety of informational texts (e.g., textbooks, biographical sketches, letters, diaries, directions, procedures, magazines, essays, primary source historical documents, editorials, news stories, periodiocals, catalogs, job-related materials, schedules, speeches, memoranda)

Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of informational texts (e.g., textbooks, biographical sketches, letters, diaries, directions, procedures, magazines, essays, primary source historical documents, editorials, news stories, periodiocals, catalogs, job-related materials, schedules, speeches, memoranda)

Scans a passage to determine whether it contains relevant information

Summarizes and paraphrases complex, implicit hierarchic structures in informational texts, including the relationships among the concepts and details in those structures

Uses new information from texts to clarify or refine understanding of academic concepts

Determines the effectiveness of techniques used to convey viewpoint

Uses discussions with peers as a way of understanding information

Reorganizes the concepts and details in informational texts in new ways and describes the advantages and disadvantages of the new organization

Evaluates the clarity and accuracy of information

Supports inferences about information in texts by referring to text features (e.g., vocabulary, text structure)

Go to Standards Search page.

Go to Content Knowledge home page.

[Content Knowledge Home Page | Browse Content Knowledge | Search Content Knowledge | McREL Home Page]

Unless otherwise specified, all pages and information at this site are Copyright © 1996, 1997 McREL.

01-September-97
webmaster@mcrel.org

Language Arts

Standard: 8

Demonstrates competence in speaking and listening as tools for learning

---

○ *AED: English - A Curriculum Profile for Australian Schools*, pp.6, 7 (Implied)
○ *New Standards: Elementory School*, pp.2, 3E, 21 ()
○ *NCTE: Standards in Practice: K-2*, pp.2, 3, 41, viii ()
○ *Texas: English Language Arts and Reading*, pp.12, 25, 40 (Explicitly stated)
○ *Board of Education, Commonwealth of Virginia: Standards of Learning*, p. 59 (Explicitly stated)

- Internet Connections - Language Arts

Level I: Primary (Grades K-2)

Recognizes the characteristic sounds and rhythms of language

Makes contributions in class and group discussions (e.g., recounts personal experiences, reports on personal knowledge about a topic, initiates conversations)

Asks and responds to questions

Follows rules of conversation (e.g., takes turns, raises hand to speak, stays on topic, focuses attention on speaker)

Uses different voice level, phrasing, and intonation for different situations

Listens and responds to oral directions

Listens to and recites familiar stories, poems, and rhymes with patterns

Listens and responds to a variety of media (e.g., books, audiotapes, videos)

Identifies differences between language used at home and language used in school

Level II: Upper Elementary (Grades 3-5)

Contributes to group discussions

Asks questions in class (e.g., when he or she is confused, to seek others' opinions and comments)

Responds to questions and comments (e.g., gives reasons in support of opinions)

Listens to classmates and adults (e.g., does not interrupt, faces the speaker, asks questions, paraphrases to confirm understanding, gives feedback)

Makes some effort to have a clear main point when speaking to others

Reads compositions to the class

Makes eye contact while giving oral presentations

Organizes ideas for oral presentations (e.g., includes content appropriate to the audience, uses notes or other memory aids, summarizes main points)

Listens to and identifies persuasive messages (e.g., television commercials, commands and requests, pressure from peers)

Identifies the use of nonverbal cues used in conversation

Identifies specific ways in which language is used in real-life situations (e.g., buying something from a shopkeeper, requesting something from a parent, arguing with a sibling, talking to a friend)

Level III: Middle School/Jr. High (Grades 6-8)

Plays a variety of roles in group discussions (e.g., active listener, discussion leader, facilitator)

Asks questions to seek elaboration and clarification of ideas

Listens in order to understand a speaker's topic, purpose, and perspective

Conveys a clear main point when speaking to others and stays on the topic being discussed

Presents simple prepared reports to the class

Uses explicit techniques for oral presentations (e.g., modulation of voice, inflection, tempo, enunciation, physical gestures, eye contact, posture)

Identifies strategies used by speakers in oral presentations (e.g., persuasive techniques, verbal and nonverbal messages, the use of fact and opinion)

Listens to and understands the impact of nonprint media on media consumers (e.g., persuasive messages and advertising in media, the presence of media in people's daily lives, the role of the media in forming opinions, media as a source of entertainment and information)

Identifies the ways in which language differs across a variety of social situations

Level IV: High School (Grades 9-12)

Evaluates own and others' effectiveness in group discussions and in formal presentations (e.g., evaluates accuracy, relevance, and organization of information; evaluates clarity of delivery; evaluates relationships among purpose, audience, and content; identifies types of arguments used)

Asks questions as a way to broaden and enrich classroom discussions

Adjusts message wording and delivery to particular audiences and for particular purposes (e.g., to defend a position, to entertain, to inform, to persuade)

Makes formal presentations to the class (e.g., includes definitions for clarity; supports main ideas using anecdotes, examples, statistics, analogies, and other evidence; uses visual aids or technology)

Uses a variety of explicit techniques for presentations (e.g., modulation of voice, inflection, tempo, enunciation, physical gestures) and demonstrates poise and self-control while presenting

Responds to questions and feedback about own presentations (e.g., defends ideas, expands on a topic, uses logical arguments)

Makes informed judgments about nonprint media (e.g., detects elements of persuasion and appeal in advertisements; recognizes the impact of pace, volume, tone, and images on media consumers)

Compares form, meaning, and usefulness of different kinds of language

Understands influences on language use (e.g., political beliefs, positions of social power, culture)

Go to Standards Search page.

Go to Content Knowledge home page.

Mathematics

Standard: 1

Uses a variety of strategies in the problem-solving process

○ *NCTM: Curriculum & Evaluation Standards for Mathematics*, pp.23, 75, 137 (Explicitly stated)
○ *NAEP: Mathematics Assessment Framework*, pp. 41-42 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: Elementary School*, p. 63 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: Middle School*, p. 57 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: High School*, p. 54 (Explicitly stated)

- Internet Connections - Mathematics

Level I: Primary (Grades K-2)

Draws pictures to represent problems

Uses discussions with teachers and other students to understand problems

Explains to others how she or he went about solving a numerical problem

Makes organized lists or tables of information necessary for solving a problem

Uses whole number models (e.g., pattern blocks, tiles, or other manipulative materials) to represent problems

Level II: Upper Elementary (Grades 3-5)

Uses a variety of strategies to understand problem situations (e.g., discussing with peers, stating problems in own words, modeling problem with diagrams or physical objects, identifying a pattern)

Represents problems situations in a variety of forms (e.g., translates from a diagram to a number or symbolic expression)

Understands that some ways of representing a problem are more helpful than others

Uses trial and error and the process of elimination to solve problems

Knows the difference between pertinent and irrelevant information when solving problems

Understands the basic language of logic in mathematical situations (e.g., "and," "or," "not")

Uses explanations of the methods and reasoning behind the problem solution to determine reasonableness of and to verify results with respect to the original problem

Understands basic valid and invalid arguments (e.g., counter examples, irrelevant approaches)

Level III: Middle School/Jr. High (Grades 6-8)

Understands how to break a complex problem into simpler parts or use a similar problem type to solve a problem

Uses a variety of strategies to understand problem-solving situations and processes (e.g., considers different strategies and approaches to a problem, restates problem from various perspectives)

Understands that there is no one right way to solve mathematical problems but that different methods (e.g., working backward from a solution, using a similar problem type, identifying a pattern) have different advantages and disadvantages

Formulates a problem, determines information required to solve the problem, chooses methods for obtaining this information, and sets limits for acceptable solutions

Represents problem situations in and translates among oral, written, concrete, pictorial, and graphical forms

Generalizes from a pattern of observations made in particular cases, makes conjectures, and provides supporting arguments for these conjectures (i.e., uses inductive reasoning)

Constructs informal logical arguments to justify reasoning processes and methods of solutions to problems (i.e., uses informal deductive methods)

Understands the role of written symbols in representing mathematical ideas and the use of precise language in conjunction with the special symbols of mathematics

Uses a variety of reasoning processes (e.g., reasoning from a counter example, using proportionality) to model and to solve problems

Level IV: High School (Grades 9-12)

Uses a variety of strategies (e.g., identify a pattern, use equivalent representations) to understand new mathematical content and to develop more efficient solution methods or problem extensions

Constructs algorithms for multi-step and non-routine problems

Understands the concept of a mathematical proof

Constructs logical verifications or counter examples to test conjectures and to justify algorithms and solutions to problems (i.e., uses deductive reasoning)

Uses formal mathematical language and notation to represent ideas, to demonstrate relationships within and among representation systems, and to formulate generalizations

Understands the difference between a statement that is verified by mathematical proof (i.e., a theorem) and one that is verified empirically using examples or data

Understands connections between equivalent representations and corresponding procedures of the same problem situation or mathematical concept (e.g., a zero of a function corresponds to an x-intercept of the graph of the function)

Understands the components of mathematical modeling (i.e., problem formulation, mathematical model, solution within the model, interpretation of solution within the model, validation in original real-world problem situation)

Go to Standards Search page.

Go to Content Knowledge home page.

[Content Knowledge Home Page | Browse Content Knowledge | Search Content Knowledge | McREL Home Page]

Unless otherwise specified, all pages and information at this site are Copyright © 1996, 1997 McREL.

01-September-97
webmaster@mcrel.org

Mathematics

Standard: 2

Understands and applies basic and advanced properties of the concepts of numbers

---

○ *NCTM: Curriculum & Evaluation Standards for Mathematics*, pp.38, 87, 91, 184 (Explicitly stated)
○ *NAEP: Mathematics Assessment Framework*, p. 20 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: Elementary School*, p. 60 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: Middle School*, p. 54 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: High School*, p. 50 (Explicitly stated)

- Internet Connections - Mathematics

Level I: Primary (Grades K-2)

Understands that numbers are symbols used to represent quantities or attributes of real-world objects

Counts whole numbers (i.e., both cardinal and ordinal numbers)

Understands symbolic, concrete, and pictorial representations of numbers (e.g., written numerals, objects in sets, number lines)

Understands basic whole number relationships (e.g., 4 is less than 10, 30 is 3 tens)

Understands the concept of a unit and its subdivision into equal parts (e.g., one object, such as a candy bar, and its division into equal parts to be shared among four people)

Level II: Upper Elementary (Grades 3-5)

Understands the relationships among fractions, decimals, mixed numbers, and whole numbers

Understands equivalent forms of basic percents, fractions, and decimals (e.g., « is equivalent to 50% is equivalent to .5) and when one form of a number might be more useful than another

Understands the basic difference between odd and even numbers

Understands the basic meaning of place value

Understands the relative magnitude of whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and mixed numbers

Uses models (e.g., number lines, two-dimensional and three-dimensional regions) to identify, order, and compare numbers

Level III: Middle School/Jr. High (Grades 6-8)

Understands the relationships among equivalent number representations (e.g., whole numbers, positive and negative integers, fractions, ratios, decimals, percents, scientific notation, exponentials) and the advantages and disadvantages of each type of representation

Understands the characteristics and properties (e.g., order relations, relative magnitude, base-ten place values) of the set of rational numbers and its subsets (e.g., whole numbers, fractions, decimals, integers)

Understands the role of positive and negative integers in the number system

Understands basic number theory concepts (e.g., prime and composite numbers, factors, multiples, odd and even numbers, square numbers, roots, divisibility)

Understands the characteristics and uses of exponents and scientific notation

Understands the structure of numeration systems that are based on numbers other than 10 (e.g., base 60 for telling time and measuring angles, Roman numerals for dates and clock faces)

Understands the concepts of ratio, proportion, and percent and the relationships among them

Level IV: High School (Grades 9-12)

Understands the properties (e.g., relative magnitude, density, absolute value) of the real number system and its subsystems (e.g., irrational numbers, natural numbers, integers, rational numbers)

Understands the properties and basic theorems of roots, exponents (e.g., [bm][bn] = bm+n), and logarithms

Understands that mathematical systems that appear to be very different may have the same structural underpinnings (e.g., binary multiplication, a series electrical circuit, and the logical operation "and" have the equivalent roles of "0," "off," and "false," as well as of "1," "on," and "true," respectively)

Uses number theory concepts (e.g., divisibility and remainders, factors, multiples, prime, relatively prime) to solve problems

Uses discrete structures (e.g., finite graphs, matrices, sequences) to represent and to solve problems

Go to Standards Search page.

Go to Content Knowledge home page.

[Content Knowledge Home Page | Browse Content Knowledge | Search Content Knowledge | McREL Home Page]

Unless otherwise specified, all pages and information at this site are Copyright © 1996, 1997 McREL.

01-September-97
webmaster@mcrel.org

Mathematics

Standard: 3

Uses basic and advanced procedures while performing the processes of computation

---

○ *NCTM: Curriculum & Evaluation Standards for Mathematics*, pp.36, 41, 44, 94, 176 (Explicitly stated)
○ *NAEP: Mathematics Assessment Framework*, p. 20 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: Elementary School*, p. 60 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: Middle School*, p. 54 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: High School*, p. 50 (Explicitly stated)

- Internet Connections - Mathematics

Level I: Primary (Grades K-2)

Adds and subtracts whole numbers

Solves real-world problems involving addition and subtraction of whole numbers

Understands common terms used with estimation (e.g., "about," "near," "closer to," "between," "a little less than")

Understands the inverse relationship between addition and subtraction

Level II: Upper Elementary (Grades 3-5)

Adds, subtracts, multiplies, and divides whole numbers and decimals

Adds and subtracts simple fractions

Uses specific strategies (e.g., front-end estimation, rounding) to estimate computations and to check the reasonableness of computational results

Performs basic mental computations (e.g., addition and subtraction of whole numbers)

Determines the effects of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division on size and order of numbers

Understands the properties of and the relationships among addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division (e.g., reversing the order of two addends does not change the sum; division is the inverse of multiplication)

Solves real-world problems involving number operations (e.g., computations with dollars and cents)

Knows the language of basic operations (e.g., "factors," "products," "multiplication")

Level III: Middle School/Jr. High (Grades 6-8)

Adds, subtracts, multiplies, and divides whole numbers, fractions, decimals, integers, and rational numbers

Understands exponentiation of rational numbers and root-extraction (e.g., squares and square roots, cubes and cube roots)

Selects and uses appropriate computational methods (e.g., mental, paper and pencil, calculator, computer) for a given situation

Understands the correct order of operations for performing arithmetic computations

Uses proportional reasoning to solve mathematical and real-world problems (e.g., involving equivalent fractions, equal ratios, constant rate of change, proportions, percents)

Understands the properties of operations with rational numbers (e.g., distributive property, commutative and associative properties of addition and multiplication, inverse properties, identity properties)

Knows when an estimate is more appropriate than an exact answer for a variety of problem situations

Understands how different algorithms work for arithmetic computations and operations

Level IV: High School (Grades 9-12)

Adds, subtracts, multiplies, divides, and simplifies rational expressions

Adds, subtracts, multiplies, divides, and simplifies radical expressions containing positive rational numbers

Understands various sources of discrepancy between an estimate and a calculated answer

Uses a variety of operations (e.g., finding a reciprocal, raising to a power, taking a root, taking a logarithm) on expressions containing real numbers

Understands basic applications of and operations on matrices

Uses recurrence relations (i.e., formulas expressing each term as a function of one or more of the previous terms, such as the Fibonacci sequence or the compound interest equation) to model and to solve real-world problems (e.g., home mortgages, annuities)

Understands counting procedures and reasoning (e.g., use of the Addition Counting Principle to find the number of ways of arranging objects in a set, the use of permutations and combinations to solve counting problems)

Go to Standards Search page.

Go to Content Knowledge home page.

[Content Knowledge Home Page | Browse Content Knowledge | Search Content Knowledge | McREL Home Page]

Unless otherwise specified, all pages and information at this site are Copyright © 1996, 1997 McREL.

01-September-97
webmaster@mcrel.org

Mathematics

Standard: 4

Understands and applies basic and advanced properties of the concepts of measurement

---

○ *NCTM: Curriculum & Evaluation Standards for Mathematics*, pp.36, 51, 116 (Explicitly stated)
○ *NAEP: Mathematics Assessment Framework*, p. 24 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: Elementary School*, p. 61 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: Middle School*, p. 55 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: High School*, p. 51 (Explicitly stated)

- Internet Connections - Mathematics

Level I: Primary (Grades K-2)

Understands the basic measures length, width, height, weight, and temperature

Understands the concept of time and how it is measured

Knows processes for telling time, counting money, and measuring length, weight, and temperature, using basic standard and non-standard units

Makes quantitative estimates of familiar linear dimensions, weights, and time intervals and checks them against measurements

Level II: Upper Elementary (Grades 3-5)

Understands the basic measures perimeter, area, volume, capacity, mass, angle, and circumference

Selects and uses appropriate tools for given measurement situations (e.g., rulers for length, measuring cups for capacity, protractors for angle)

Knows approximate size of basic standard units (e.g., centimeters, feet, grams) and relationships between them (e.g., between inches and feet)

Understands relationships between measures (e.g., between length, perimeter, and area)

Understands that measurement is not exact (i.e., measurements may give slightly different numbers when measured multiple times)

Uses specific strategies to estimate quantities and measurements (e.g., estimating the whole by estimating the parts)

Selects and uses appropriate units of measurement, according to type and size of unit

Level III: Middle School/Jr. High (Grades 6-8)

Understands the basic concept of rate as a measure (e.g., miles per gallon)

Solves problems involving perimeter (circumference) and area of various shapes (e.g., parallelograms, triangles, circles)

Understands the relationships among linear dimensions, area, and volume and the corresponding uses of units, square units, and cubic units of measure

Solves problems involving units of measurement and converts answers to a larger or smaller unit within the same system (i.e., standard or metric)

Understands the concepts of precision and significant digits as they relate to measurement (e.g., how units indicate precision)

Selects and uses appropriate units and tools, depending on degree of accuracy required, to find measurements for real-world problems

Understands formulas for finding measures (e.g., area, volume, surface area)

Selects and uses appropriate estimation techniques (e.g., overestimate, underestimate, range of estimates) to solve real-world problems

Understands procedures for basic indirect measurements (e.g., using grids to estimate area of irregular figures)

Level IV: High School (Grades 9-12)

Solves problems involving rate as a measure (e.g., velocity, acceleration)

Understands the concepts of absolute and relative errors in measurement

Selects and uses an appropriate direct or indirect method of measurement in a given situation (e.g., uses properties of similar triangles to measure indirectly the height of an inaccessible object)

Solves real-world problems involving three-dimensional measures (e.g., volume, surface area)

Go to Standards Search page.

Go to Content Knowledge home page.

[Content Knowledge Home Page | Browse Content Knowledge | Search Content Knowledge | McREL Home Page]

Unless otherwise specified, all pages and information at this site are Copyright © 1996, 1997 McREL.

01-September-97
webmaster@mcrel.org

Mathematics

Standard: 5

Understands and applies basic and advanced properties of the concepts of geometry

---

○ *NCTM: Curriculum & Evaluation Standards for Mathematics*, pp.48, 112, 157, 161, 163 (Explicitly stated)
○ *NAEP: Mathematics Assessment Framework*, p. 26 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: Elementary School*, p. 61 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: Middle School*, p. 55 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: High School*, p. 51 (Explicitly stated)

- Internet Connections - Mathematics

Level I: Primary (Grades K-2)

Understands basic properties of (e.g., number of sides, corners, square corners) and similarities and differences between simple geometric shapes

Understands the common language of spatial sense (e.g., "inside," "between," "above," "below," "behind")

Understands that geometric shapes are useful for representing and describing real world situations

Understands that patterns can be made by putting different shapes together or taking them apart

Level II: Upper Elementary (Grades 3-5)

Knows basic geometric language for describing and naming shapes (e.g., trapezoid, parallelogram, cube, sphere)

Understands basic properties of figures (e.g., two- or three-dimensionality, symmetry, number of faces, type of angle)

Predicts and verifies the effects of combining, subdividing, and changing basic shapes

Understands that shapes can be congruent or similar

Uses motion geometry (e.g., turns, flips, slides) to understand geometric relationships

Understands characteristics of lines (e.g., parallel, perpendicular, intersecting) and angles (e.g., right, acute)

Understands how scale in maps and drawings shows relative size and distance

Level III: Middle School/Jr. High (Grades 6-8)

Uses geometric methods (i.e., an unmarked straightedge and a compass using an algorithm) to complete basic geometric constructions (e.g., perpendicular bisector of a line segment, angle bisector)

Understands the defining properties of three-dimensional figures (e.g., a cube has edges with equal lengths, faces with equal areas and congruent shapes, right angle corners)

Understands the defining properties of triangles (e.g., the sum of the measures of two sides of a triangle must be greater than the measure of the third side)

Understands geometric transformations of figures (e.g., rotations, translations, dilations)

Understands the relationships between two- and three-dimensional representations of a figure (e.g., scale drawings, blueprints, planar cross sections)

Understands the mathematical concepts of similarity (e.g., scale, proportion, growth rates) and congruency

Understands the concept of tessellation (i.e., a repetitive pattern of polygons that fit together with no gaps or holes)

Understands the basic concept of the Pythagorean Theorem

Level IV: High School (Grades 9-12)

Understands that objects and relations in geometry correspond directly to objects and relations in algebra (e.g., a line in geometry corresponds to a set of ordered pairs satisfying an equation of the form ax + by = c)

Uses the Pythagorean Theorem and its converse and properties of special right triangles (e.g., 30o-60o-90o triangle) to solve mathematical and real-world problems

Uses synthetic (i.e., pictorial) representations and analytic (i.e., coordinate) methods to solve problems involving symmetry and transformations of figures (e.g., problems involving distance, midpoint, and slope; determination of symmetry with respect to a point or line)

Understands the characteristics and uses of vectors (e.g., representations of velocity and force)

Uses geometric constructions (e.g., the parallel to a line through a given point not on the line, line segment congruent to a given line segment) to complete simple proofs, to model, and to solve mathematical and real-world problems

Uses basic operations on vectors (e.g., vector addition, scalar multiplication)

Understands the basic concepts of right triangle trigonometry (e.g., basic trigonometric ratios such as sine, cosine, and tangent)

Uses trigonometric ratio methods to solve mathematical and real-world problems (e.g., determination of the angle of depression between two markers on a contour map with different elevations)

Understands the basic properties and uses of polar coordinates

Uses inductive and deductive reasoning to make observations about and to verify properties of and relationships among figures (e.g., the relationship among interior angles of parallel lines cut by a transversal)

Uses properties of and relationships among figures to solve mathematical and real-world problems (e.g., uses the property that the sum of the angles in a quadrilateral is equal to 360 degrees to square up the frame for a building; uses understanding of arc, chord, tangents, and properties of circles to determine the radius given a circular edge of a circle without the center)

Go to Standards Search page.

Go to Content Knowledge home page.

[Content Knowledge Home Page | Browse Content Knowledge | Search Content Knowledge | McREL Home Page]

Unless otherwise specified, all pages and information at this site are Copyright © 1996, 1997 McREL.

01-September-97
webmaster@mcrel.org

Mathematics

Standard: 6

Understands and applies basic and advanced concepts of statistics and data analysis

○ *NCTM: Curriculum & Evaluation Standards for Mathematics*, pp.54, 105, 167 (Explicitly stated)
○ *NAEP: Mathematics Assessment Framework*, p. 29 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: Elementary School*, p. 62 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: Middle School*, p. 56 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: High School*, p. 53 (Explicitly stated)

- Internet Connections - Mathematics

Level I: Primary (Grades K-2)

Understands that observations about objects or events can be organized and displayed in simple graphs

Understands that one can find out about a group of things by studying just a few of them

Level II: Upper Elementary (Grades 3-5)

Understands that data represent specific pieces of information about real-world objects or activities

Understands that spreading data out on a number line helps to see what the extremes are, where the data points pile up, and where the gaps are

Understands that a summary of data should include where the middle is and how much spread there is around it

Organizes and displays data in simple bar graphs, pie charts, and line graphs

Reads and interprets simple bar graphs, pie charts, and line graphs

Understands that data come in many different forms and that collecting, organizing, and displaying data can be done in many ways

Understands the basic concept of a sample (e.g., a large sample leads to more reliable information; a small part of something may have unique characteristics but not be an accurate representation of the whole)

Level III: Middle School/Jr. High (Grades 6-8)

Understands basic characteristics of measures of central tendency (i.e., mean, mode, median)

Understands basic characteristics of frequency and distribution (e.g., range, varying rates of change, gaps, clusters)

Understands the basic concepts of center and dispersion of data

Reads and interprets data in charts, tables, plots (e.g., stem-and-leaf, box-and-whiskers, scatter), and graphs (e.g., bar, circle, line)

Uses data and statistical measures for a variety of purposes (e.g., formulating hypotheses, making predictions, testing conjectures)

Organizes and displays data using tables, graphs (e.g., line, circle, bar), frequency distributions, and plots (e.g., stem-and-leaf, box-and-whiskers, scatter)

Understands faulty arguments, common errors, and misleading presentations of data

Understands that the same set of data can be represented using a variety of tables, graphs, and symbols and that different modes of representation often convey different messages (e.g., variation in scale can alter a visual message)

Understands the basic concept of outliers

Understands basic concepts about how samples are chosen (e.g., random samples, bias in sampling procedures, limited samples, sampling error)

Level IV: High School (Grades 9-12)

Selects and uses the best method of representing and describing a set of data (e.g., scatter plot, line graph, two-way table)

Understands measures of central tendency and variability (e.g., standard deviation, range, quartile deviation) and their applications to specific situations

Understands the concept of correlation (e.g., the difference between a "true" correlation and a "believable" correlation; when two variables are correlated)

Understands different methods of curve-fitting (e.g., median-fit line, regression line) and various applications (e.g., making predictions)

Understands how outliers may affect various representations of data (e.g., a regression line might be strongly influenced by a few aberrant points, whereas the scatter plot for the same data might suggest that the aberrant points represent mistakes)

Understands how the reader's bias, measurement error, and display distortion can affect the interpretation of data

Understands sampling distributions, the central limit theorem, and confidence intervals

Understands how concepts of representativeness, randomness, and bias in sampling can affect experimental outcomes and statistical interpretations

Understands that making an inference about a population from a sample always involves uncertainty and the role of statistics is to estimate the size of that uncertainty

Go to Standards Search page.

Go to Content Knowledge home page.

[Content Knowledge Home Page | Browse Content Knowledge | Search Content Knowledge | McREL Home Page]

Unless otherwise specified, all pages and information at this site are Copyright © 1996, 1997 McREL.

01-September-97
webmaster@mcrel.org

Mathematics

Standard: 7

Understands and applies basic and advanced concepts of probability

○ *NCTM: Curriculum & Evaluation Standards for Mathematics*, pp.54, 109, 171 (Explicitly stated)
○ *NAEP: Mathematics Assessment Framework*, p. 29 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: Elementary School*, p. 62 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: Middle School*, p. 56 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: High School*, p. 53 (Explicitly stated)

- Internet Connections - Mathematics

Level I: Primary (Grades K-2)

Understands that some events are more likely to happen than others

Understands that some events can be predicted fairly well but others cannot because we do not always know everything that may affect an event

Level II: Upper Elementary (Grades 3-5)

Understands that the word "chance" refers to the likelihood of an event

Recognizes events that are sure to happen, events that are sure not to happen, and events that may or may not happen (e.g., in terms of "certain," "uncertain," "likely," "unlikely")

Understands that when predictions are based on what is known about the past, one must assume that conditions stay the same from the past event to the predicted future event

Understands that statistical predictions are better for describing what proportion of a group will experience something (e.g., what proportion of automobiles will be involved in accidents) rather than which individuals within the group will experience something, and how often events will occur (e.g., how many sunny days will occur over a year) rather than exactly when they will occur

Uses basic sample spaces (i.e., the set of all possible outcomes) to describe events

Level III: Middle School/Jr. High (Grades 6-8)

Determines probability using mathematical/theoretical models (e.g., table or tree diagram, area model, list, counting procedures, sample space)

Determines probability using simulations or experiments

Understands how predictions are based on data and probabilities (e.g., the difference between predictions based on theoretical probability and experimental probability)

Understands that the measure of certainty in a given situation depends on a number of factors (e.g., amount of data collected, what is known about the situation, how current data are)

Understands the relationship between the numerical expression of a probability (e.g., fraction, percentage, odds) and the events that produce these numbers

Level IV: High School (Grades 9-12)

Understands the concept of a random variable

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Understands the concepts of independent and dependent events and how they are related to compound events and conditional probability

Uses a variety of experimental, simulation, and theoretical methods (e.g., counting procedures, trees, formulas for permutations and combinations, Monte Carlo simulations, statistical experiments) to determine probabilities

Understands the differences among experimental, simulation, and theoretical probability techniques and the advantages and disadvantages of each

Understands the properties of the normal curve (i.e., the graph used to approximate the distribution of data for many real-world phenomena) and how the normal curve can be used to answer questions about sets of data

Understands the concept of discrete probability distribution

Go to Standards Search page.

Go to Content Knowledge home page.

[Content Knowledge Home Page | Browse Content Knowledge | Search Content Knowledge | McREL Home Page]

Unless otherwise specified, all pages and information at this site are Copyright © 1996, 1997 McREL.

01-September-97
webmaster@mcrel.org

Mathematics

Standard: 8

Understands and applies basic and advanced properties of functions and algebra

---

○ *NCTM: Curriculum & Evaluation Standards for Mathematics*, pp.60, 98, 102, 150, 154 (Explicitly stated)
○ *NAEP: Mathematics Assessment Framework*, p. 33 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: Elementary School*, p. 62 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: Middle School*, p. 56 (Explicitly stated)
○ *New Standards: High School*, p. 52 (Explicitly stated)

- Internet Connections - Mathematics

Level I: Primary (Grades K-2)

Recognizes regularities in a variety of contexts (e.g., events, designs, shapes, sets of numbers)

Extends simple patterns (e.g., of numbers, physical objects, geometric shapes)

Level II: Upper Elementary (Grades 3-5)

Recognizes a wide variety of patterns (e.g., basic linear patterns such as [2, 4, 6, 8 . . .] ; simple repeating and growing patterns) and the rules that explain them

Understands that the same pattern can be represented in different ways (e.g., geometrically or numerically; the pattern of numbers [7, 14, 21, 28 . . .] is equivalent to the mathematical relationship 7 n)

Knows that a variable is a letter or symbol that stands for one or more numbers

Understands the basic concept of an equality relationship (i.e., an equation is a number sentence that shows two quantities that are equal)

Solves simple open sentences involving operations on whole numbers (e.g., + 17 = 23)

Knows basic characteristics and features of the rectangular coordinate system (e.g., the horizontal axis is the X axis and the vertical axis is the Y axis)

Level III: Middle School/Jr. High (Grades 6-8)

Knows that an expression is a mathematical statement using numbers and symbols to represent relationships and real-world situations (e.g., equations and inequalities with or without variables)

Understands that a variable can be used in many ways (e.g., as a placeholder for a specific unknown, such as $x + 8 = 13$; as a representative of a range of values, such as $4t + 7$)

Understands various representations (e.g., tables, graphs, verbal descriptions, algebraic expressions, Venn diagram) of patterns and functions and the relationships among them

Understands the basic concept of a function (i.e., functions describe how changes in one quantity or variable result in changes in another)

Solves linear equations using concrete, informal, and formal methods (e.g., using properties, graphing ordered pairs, using slope-intercept form)

Solves simple inequalities and non-linear equations with rational number solutions, using concrete and informal methods

Understands special values (e.g., minimum and maximum values, x- and y-intercepts, slope, constant ratio or difference) of patterns, relationships, and functions

Understands basic operations (e.g., combining like terms, expanding, substituting for unknowns) on algebraic expressions

Uses the rectangular coordinate system to model and to solve problems

Solves simple systems of equations graphically

Understands the properties of arithmetic and geometric sequences (i.e., linear and exponential patterns)

Level IV: High School (Grades 9-12)

Understands appropriate terminology and notation used to define functions and their properties (e.g., domain, range, function composition, inverses)

Uses expressions, equations, inequalities, and matrices to represent situations that involve variable quantities and translates among these representations

Understands characteristics and uses of basic trigonometric functions (e.g., the sine and cosine functions as models of periodic real-world phenomena)

Understands properties of graphs and the relationship between a graph and its corresponding expression (e.g., maximum and minimum points)

Understands basic concepts (e.g., roots) and applications (e.g., determining cost, revenue, and profit situations) of polynomial equations

Understands the concept of a function as the correspondences between the elements of two sets (e.g., in algebra, functions are relationships between variables that represent numbers; in geometry, functions relate sets of points to their images under motions such as flips, slides, and turns; in the "real-world," functions are mathematical representations of many input-output situations)

Uses a variety of models (e.g., written statement, algebraic formula, table of input-output values, graph) to represent functions, patterns, and relationships

Understands the general properties and characteristics of many types of functions (e.g., direct and inverse variation, general polynomial, radical, step, exponential, logarithmic, sinusoidal)

Understands the effects of parameter changes on functions and their graphs

Understands the basic concept of inverse function and the corresponding graph

Uses a variety of methods (e.g., with graphs, algebraic methods, and matrices) to solve systems of equations and inequalities

Understands formal notation (e.g., sigma notation, factorial representation) and various applications (e.g., compound interest) of sequences and series

Uses a variety of methods (e.g., approximate solutions, such as bisection, sign changes, and successive approximation) to solve complex equations (e.g., polynomial equations with real roots)

Go to Standards Search page.

Go to Content Knowledge home page.

[Content Knowledge Home Page | Browse Content Knowledge | Search Content Knowledge | McREL Home Page]

Unless otherwise specified, all pages and information at this site are Copyright © 1996, 1997 McREL.

01-September-97

Mathematics

Standard: 9

Understands the general nature and uses of mathematics

○ *Project 2061: Benchmarks for Science Literacy*, p. 23 (Explicitly stated)

- Internet Connections - Mathematics

Level I: Primary (Grades K-2)

Not appropriate for this level

Level II: Upper Elementary (Grades 3-5)

Understands that numbers and the operations performed on them can be used to describe things in the real world and predict what might occur

Understands that mathematical ideas and concepts can be represented concretely, graphically, and symbolically

Level III: Middle School/Jr. High (Grades 6-8)

Understands that mathematics has been helpful in practical ways for many centuries

Understands that mathematicians often represent real things using abstract ideas like numbers or lines; they then work with these abstractions to learn about the things they represent

Level IV: High School (Grades 9-12)

Understands that mathematics is the study of any pattern or relationship, but natural science is the study of those patterns that are relevant to the observable world

Understands that mathematics began long ago to help solve practical problems; however, it soon focused on abstractions drawn from the world and then on abstract relationships among those abstractions

Understands that in mathematics, as in other sciences, simplicity is one of the highest values; some mathematicians try to identify the smallest set of rules from which many other propositions can be logically derived

Understands that theories in mathematics are greatly influenced by practical issues; real-world problems sometimes result in new mathematical theories and pure mathematical theories sometimes have highly practical applications

Understands that new mathematics continues to be invented even today, along with new connections between various components of mathematics

Understands that science and mathematics operate under common principles: belief in order, ideals of honesty and openness, the importance of review by colleagues, and the importance of imagination

Understands that mathematics provides a precise system to describe objects, events, and relationships and to construct logical arguments

Understands that the development of computers has opened many new doors to mathematics just as other advances in technology can open up new areas to mathematics

Understands that mathematics often stimulates innovations in science and technology

Understands that mathematicians commonly operate by choosing an interesting set of rules and then playing according to those rules; the only limit to those rules is that they should not contradict each other

Appendix B
Sample Classroom Assessments Analyzed for Quality

	#Pages*
#1 Checklist of Assessment Quality	**8 pages**
#2 Green Light/Red Flag	**6 pages**
#3 Tall Tales and Fables—assessment	**2 pages**
#4 Tall Tales and Fables—analysis	**6 pages**
#5 Reading Rate—assessment	**7 pages**
#6 Reading Rate—analysis	**7 pages**
#7 Interview Assessment—assessment	**18 pages**
#8 Interview Assessment—analysis	**7 pages**

* Each section is numbered separately. The left footer gives document title and order. The page number is on the right.

© Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1998, Judy Arter, 503-275-9500

Checklist of Assessment Quality[1]

Before using any assessment, the user must assure its quality. Any standardized test, state- or district-developed assessment, or classroom assessment must be evaluated through the careful application of specific quality control standards.

The Basis of Evaluation

On the following pages are the questions that an assessment user should ask when conducting such an analysis of quality. There is a page for reviewing each of the Five Keys to Quality Assessment:

1. **Key 1**—*What*: A sound assessment arises from clear and appropriate target(s).
2. **Key 2**—*Why*: A sound assessment promises to serve clearly articulated and appropriate purposes, including direct connections to opportunities for student learning.
3. **Key 3**—*How*: A sound assessment uses a method appropriate for the targets and purposes.
4. **Key 4**—*How Much*: A sound assessment samples student achievement appropriately.
5. **Key 5**—*How Accurate*: A sound assessment is developed and used in a bias-free manner.

The Green Light/Red Flag attachment helps the reviewer know what to look for in each category. It essentially provides rubrics, with indicators, for evaluating the quality of a classroom assessment.

Prerequisites for Effective Analysis

In order to conduct a focused analysis of the quality of any assessment, the analyst must bring to that review process an appropriate background. That background includes two parts.

First, the reviewer must bring an understanding of the principles of effective assessment practice. Without an understanding of the differences between sound and unsound assessment, dependable answers to the attached questions will remain beyond reach. In other words, this form cannot be completed based on casual examination of an assessment. The standards of sound practice upon which this analysis is based are described briefly in the introduction to the *Mini-Lessons* and in more detail in the book, *Student-Centered Classroom Assessment, Second Edition,* by Rick Stiggins.

---

[1] Adapted from materials prepared by Judy Arter and Rick Stiggins for the Washington Commission on Student Learning, March 1998.

Also, the reviewer must bring to the evaluation a clear and complete understanding of the achievement target he or she intends to assess. If the potential user does not know and understand what it is by way of student learning that is to be assessed, how could that educator evaluate whether a particular assessment is likely to work or not?

Sample classroom assessments evaluated using the checklist and Green Light/Red Flag materials are attached. When learning any criteria for quality—from oral presentations in the classroom to teacher-made classroom assessments—scored samples help make the criteria real. The three attached samples are:

1. Tall Tales and Fables, grade 2 language arts
2. Be Careful, Ruth!, grade 3-5 reading rate
3. Job Interview Assessment, high school oral communication

In these samples, the analysis for each key begins on a separate page. Perhaps subtle, but done for an important purpose: you can pass out analyses for one key without giving away the answer to the others.

Key 1—What: A sound assessment arises from clear and appropriate achievement target(s)

A. Has the developer of the assessment being evaluated clearly specified the achievement targets that are supposed to be reflected in the exercises?

___ Yes	If yes, please list the intended targets below
___ No	If no, can you figure them out by examining the exercises and performance criteria? If you can, please list them below.

B. Compare the intended targets of the assessment under consideration to your needs. How do they match up?

___ Good match	Cite evidence below.
___ Some match	List matching parts below.
___ Mismatch	

Based on your analysis of clarity and appropriateness of targets, is this a sound assessment? If yes, go on to the next page. If not, is there enough there to warrant revision and use? Or, are there some parts of the assessment that might align properly? If no, stop here.

Key 2a—Why: A sound assessment serves a clearly articulated and appropriate purpose.

A. Did the developer of the assessment under consideration specify its intended purposes (users and uses)?

___ Yes	If yes, please list them below.
___ No	If no, can you figure out the developer's intended or potential uses by examining the assessment itself? If you can, please list them below.

B. Can this assessment serve your intended purposes?

___ Yes	If yes, describe how they connect in the space below.
___ No	If no, please describe the mismatch as you see it.

Is this a sound assessment in terms of its match to your intended purposes? If yes, go on. If no, is there enough there to warrant revision and use? Or, are there parts of this assessment that might serve your purposes? If not, stop here.

Key 2b—Why: A sound assessment can be connected directly to student learning.

A. If you use this assessment, are you confident that the results will suggest to you what to do next to enhance student learning?

___	Yes	If yes, why? What would you do if performance were low?
___	No	If no, why not? Could you fix the assessment so that it would? How?

B. Is it clear to you how this assessment might help you communicate with others about student achievement?

___	Yes	If yes, how?
___	No	If no, could you alter the assessment procedures so that it would? How?

C. Is it clear to you how you might involve students with this assessment as a way to help them:

- See and understand your intended achievement target(s)?
- Practice hitting that target?
- See themselves growing in their achievement over time?
- Communicate effectively with others about their success as learners?

___	Yes	If yes, describe why.
___	No	If no, why not? Could you add to the assessment so that it would have these effects? How?

Can you see how this assessment offers quality opportunities for direct student involvement in the assessment process? If yes, this assessment might just be for you! If not, is there enough there to warrant additions and use? Or, is there a part of the assessment that would be useful to use in this manner? If not, consider not using this assessment.

Key 3—How: A sound assessment relies on an appropriate assessment method.

A. Are you clear about why the developer of the assessment under consideration chose the particular assessment method(s) used? Does the selection of that method make sense to you given the targets and purposes?

___ Yes If yes, state below why you think it is a strong match.
___ No If no, what do you think might have been a better match?

B. Do the targets specified for the assessment, the assessment tasks or exercises, and the scoring criteria used to evaluate performance all reflect the same thing—are they aligned?

___ Yes If yes, describe the consistencies below.
___ No If no, describe the inconsistencies below.

Is this a sound assessment in terms of its reliance on a proper assessment method? If yes, go on. If no, is there enough here to warrant revision and use? Or are there useful elements of this assessment that rely on proper methods? If not, stop here.

Key 4—How Much: A sound assessment provides an appropriate sample of achievement.

A. Is it clear to you how the exercises (tasks, questions) included in the assessment under consideration cover the domain of achievement that falls within the target?

___Yes If yes, please describe the sampling plan as you see it.
___ No If no, describe what has been overlooked.

B. Based on that target and coverage, would you feel comfortable drawing conclusions about student mastery based on their responses to the exercises included? Are all the important features of achievement covered?

___Yes If yes, please describe why.
___ No If no, what has been left out? Could you supplement the given assessment with additional exercises to provide better coverage?

C. Do you see how you might reduce or increase the number of exercises included to more efficiently, yet still representatively, cover the required ground?

___ Yes If yes, what specific reductions might you make?
___ No, or not applicable

Does this assessment sample student achievement with enough of the right kinds of exercises to give you confidence? If yes, go on. If no, is there enough here to warrant revision and use? Or, are there elements of the assessment that sample parts of the target of interest? If not, stop here.

Key 5—How Accurate: A sound assessment avoids distortion of scores due to bias.

A. Are the exercises (tasks, questions) of high quality, given the assessment method used?

___ Yes If yes, cite the quality standards met.
___ No If no, cite the quality standards not met. Could you revise this exercise to work, or might you find other exercises that might work?

B. If a performance assessment, are the scoring criteria of high quality?

___ Yes If yes, cite the quality standards met.
___ No If no, cite the quality standards not met. Could you revise these criteria to work, or might you find other criteria that would work with the exercises?

C. Do you notice anything else about the assessment under consideration that might have the effect of masking a student's actual level of achievement—the possibility of incorrect judgments being made by the evaluator; some characteristic of the student unrelated to achievement; some characteristic of the environment?

___ Yes If yes, what specifically? Could you alter the assessment procedures to fix the problem?

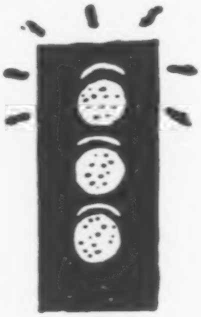
___ No

D. Would all groups of students have an equal opportunity to perform well on this assessment if they had mastered the target(s) being assessed?

___ Yes If yes, why?
___ No If no, who might be at a disadvantage and why? Could you alter the assessment exercises or procedures to fix the problem?

Is this assessment likely to produce bias-free information about student achievement? If yes, this one's a winner. If no, is there enough here to warrant revision and use? Or, are there parts of the assessment that might produce dependable information? If not, don't use it.

Green Light/Red Flag
Classroom Assessment Quality Checklist



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Key 1—*What*: Clear and Appropriate Targets

Green Light

- Stated
- Selective
- Important; worth the assessment time devoted to them
- Relate clearly to district/state standards/outcomes
- Effort to define targets: examples, references to definitions, performance criteria
- Teachers would interpret the target the same
- Description reflects an understanding of best thinking about the target
- Has table of specifications that is understandable
- Good mix of targets

Red Flag

- Overly general, vague; anything could match
- None stated
- Everything is listed
- Outcomes seem to be retrofitted
- Rambles; lists one and later seems to maybe list others, but not sure
- Stated, but seem trivial; why spend time assessing this?
- Description doesn't seem to reflect an understanding of best thinking about the target
- Poor mix of targets
- No connection to district/state standards/outcomes
- Mixes up targets and tasks
- Teachers might interpret the target differently

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Key 2—Why: Clear and Appropriate Users and Uses

Green Light

- Clearly stated
- Focused—there aren't too many
- Developer has anticipated the needs of the users—type of information, timing, understandability
- Developer makes statements relating design to users
- Assessment is designed to promote instructional uses—student understanding of the target, self-assessment, tracking of progress, communicating about progress

Red Flag

- Too many users and uses
- No purposes stated
- Stated purpose doesn't seem to match the assessment—reporting that the stated users might not understand, sampling that won't permit the conclusion to be drawn
- The only purpose is grading

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Key 3—How:
Target-Method Match

Green Light

- Method matches purpose and target (see Stiggins or Marzano)
- Developer provides a reasonable rationale for the method(s) used and where/why compromises had to be made
- Table of specifications showing how each target is to be measured and its relative importance

Red Flag

- The method doesn't seem capable of doing the job—Why did they assess the target *that* way?
- One type of assessment is used for everything
- There is no rationale for the methods used
- The method seems to be "overkill" for the target

Key 4—How Much: Sampling

Green Light

- Sample will accomplish it's purpose
- There are enough samples
- There are not too many samples
- Tasks cover the ground well

Red Flag

- Not enough tasks to draw the desired conclusion
- Tasks do not cover the ground well

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Key 5—How Accurate: Avoiding Sources of Bias and Distortion

Green Light:

- It is clear what students and others are to do
- Tasks seem to match the targets and criteria—complex target, complex task; simple target, simple task
- Possible sources of bias & distortion are described or acknowledged; caveats on use are given
- Performance criteria, when present, are clear, well defined, and cover the most salient features of a performance
- Paper and pencil methods adhere to standards of quality
- Students of equal ability will have an equal opportunity to shine

Red Flag

- Tasks are vague or confusing
- Tasks don't adhere to standards of quality
- It would be hard to do the task successfully
- Developer seems to be unaware of possible sources of bias and distortion
- You can readily identify several sources of bias and distortion
- Criteria for performance assessments don't cover important elements of performance, are vague or confusing, or miss the point
- Tasks/procedures might unfairly cause different groups to do poorly even when their skills and knowledge are the same

TALL TALES AND FABLES

Topic

Tall Tales and Fables

Concepts/Skills Introduced or Reinforced

- language arts
- writing
- reading
- spelling

Grade or Level Appropriateness

Grade 2

Duration

2 weeks

Integrated Instruction Model Used

webbed

Unit Activity List

- Reading. Read tall tales and fables.
- Viewing film. Watch videos of tall tales and fables.
- Listening. Listen as the teacher reads tall tales and fables.
- Description. Describe a character in a tall tale.
- Exaggerations. List exaggerations found in stories.
- Research/Collage Creation. Look through magazines to find pictures that relate to tall tales.

Interdisciplinary Units With Alternative Assessments: A Teacher-Developed Compendium, Virginia Education Association & AEL, 1995

Reprinted with permission of author.

Alternative Assessments Used
product

Unit Assessment List
Writing or retelling a tall tale or fable

ACTIVITY/ASSESSMENT DESCRIPTIONS AND RUBRICS

Develop and write a tall tale or fable

Criteria
Handwriting or word processing is neat and legible.
Spelling of all core words is correct, and most other words are spelled correctly.
Capital letters are used appropriately to begin sentences and for proper names.
Punctuation is used correctly.
Understanding—The student demonstrates an understanding of the exaggeration.

Rubric
Distinguished—Writing shows creativity in plot and character development. Tall tale or fable uses exaggeration appropriately. Writing is correct in all mechanics (see *criteria*).

Proficient—Tall tale or fable correctly uses plot and exaggeration. Characteristics may not be well developed. Few errors in mechanics are apparent.

Apprentice—Tall tale or fable does not show exaggeration or fictitious characters. Errors in mechanics are common.

Novice—Tall tale or fable is begun but not concluded. Writing shows lack of understanding of exaggeration. Several errors in mechanics are found.

Strengths

- The children enjoyed the fables and tall tales I read to them.
- They were excited about writing their own stories.
- This activity lends itself well to more integration with reading.

Needed Improvement:

- Many students have trouble reading tall tales and fables and don't enjoy it unless they are read to. This could be corrected by having them read with partners or by tape recording their stories.

Unit Developer:
Virginia Education Association · Appalachia Educational Laboratory · April 1995. Reprinted with permission of author.

Checklist of Assessment Quality[1]
Tall Tales and Fables

Title of Assessment: Tall Tales and Fables

Intended Grade Levels: Grade 2

Key 1: A sound assessment arises from a clear and appropriate achievement target.

A. Has the developer of the assessment being evaluated clearly specified the achievement targets that are supposed to be reflected in the exercises?

No. The stated "Concepts/Skills Introduced or Reinforced" are so vague and general that it is impossible to tell exactly what skills and learnings are to be developed with this unit of study and assessed with the accompanying assessments. The Unit Activities List helps a little to clarify the intended targets. The teacher lists "describe a character" and "list exaggerations." Therefore, it seems that these are part of the focus of the unit.

The assessment doesn't help much in assisting me to determine the targets. The assessment activity itself only addresses one small portion, retelling or writing, of the stated Concepts/Skills for the unit/assessment. And, the criteria listed for the assessment only address the writing part. If the student chose to do a retelling, the rubric doesn't match at all. Additionally, the criteria listed for writing only address a small portion of the possible outcomes for writing that might be implied by the stated concepts/skills.

All in all, there is a serious lack of alignment between the stated goals for the unit, the instructional activities presented to achieve those goals, the assessment task, and the performance criteria provided.

B. Compare the intended targets of the assessment under consideration to your needs. How do they match up?

Even with the sources of unclarity noted above, the assessment, as given, *might* be useful for assessing some portion of writing targets. So, I will continue this analysis.

Rating: I would give this assessment a "1" on the trait of clear and appropriate targets, on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is low and 5 is high.

---

[1] Adapted from materials prepared by Judy Arter and Rick Stiggins for the Washington Commission on Student Learning, March 1998.

Key 2a: A sound assessment serves a clearly articulated purpose.

A. Did the developer of the assessment under consideration specify its intended purposes (users and uses)?

No. It is difficult to tell what the intended purpose for this assessment is. Grading? Tracking progress toward important student learning targets? Student self-assessment?

B. Can this assessment serve your intended purposes?

Yes, even though the developer did not state a purpose, this might still be useful for my purposes because it *might* be okay for assessing writing.

Key 2b: A sound assessment can be connected directly to student learning.

A. If you use this assessment, are you confident that the results will suggest to you what to do next to enhance student learning?

No. The criteria and task are much too vague for that. Additionally, it is not clear how the assessment relates to the targets. This one is not worth trying to fix.

B. Is it clear to you how this assessment might help you communicate with others about student achievement?

The communication aspects of this assessment are very weak. Who sees the results? Students? Parents? Will they understand the nature of what is being communicated?

C. Is it clear to you how you might involve students with this assessment as a way to help them:

- See and understand your intended achievement target(s)?
- Practice hitting that target?
- See themselves growing in their achievement over time?
- Communicate effectively with others about their success as learners?

No. The criteria and procedures are much too vague. I don't know, for example, that the purpose for reading the tall tales and viewing the fables is to discuss and illustrate what it is that makes a *good* or *weak* tall tale or fable. I assume that is the case, but it might not be. There is no provision for students to generate criteria based on these discussions, nor to review clear criteria that are already developed. Thus, it appears that the activities stand the chance of not helping the students to understand the nature of the achievement targets to be met, of practicing to hit the targets, nor of monitoring their own growth over time. It is unclear whether this assessment will have any positive consequences for students, or whether it will just be an instance in which a teacher is asking them to do a mysterious task for mysterious reasons, with a mysterious judgment of quality attached to the result, which is mysteriously related to some learning target or other.

Rating: I would give this assessment a "1" on the trait of clear and appropriate users and uses.

Key 3: A sound assessment relies on an appropriate assessment method.

A. Are you clear about why the developer of the assessment under consideration chose the particular assessment method(s) used? Does the selection of that method make sense to you given the targets and purposes?

> Yes, for writing. Although the developer is not explicit on why the assessment method is chosen, it is clear that the best way to see if students can write is to actually have them write—a performance assessment.
>
> Some of the other skills listed in the "Concepts/Skills" section and the "Unit Activities List" might be better assessed using other formats. For example, to tell if a student has the prerequisite skill of "being able to find and list exaggerations," the teacher might have a short answer test. Unfortunately, this, and any other student learning targets, are ignored in the assessment provided.
>
> The bigger issue with this assessment/instructional unit is the missed opportunities for assessment that could occur during the instructional activities listed. In other words, why is the assessment only at the end? The whole package could be made much stronger, for example, by assessing listening while the teacher reads tall tales and fables or assessing knowledge of exaggeration while the students are listing exaggerations found in stories. Of course, to do this, the developer would have to specify the criteria by which listening will be assessed and the procedures the teacher will use to assess it. For the latter, for example, the teacher might have a parent observe groups of students, or students could listen for the types of questions they ask.

B. Do the targets specified for the assessment, the assessment tasks or exercises, and the scoring criteria used to evaluate performance all reflect the same thing. Are they aligned?

> The mismatch was previously discussed.

However, since the writing portion of the assessment *might* meet my needs, I'll continue this evaluation.

Rating: I would give this assessment a "1/2" on the trait of target-method match.

Key 4: A sound assessment provides an appropriate sample of achievement.

A. Is it clear to you how the exercises (tasks, questions) included in the assessment under consideration cover the domain of achievement that falls within the target?

> It's clear to me that it *doesn't* cover the domain of achievement. Only a portion of writing competency is covered. I would have to expand and clarify the criteria if I wanted to assess the ability of students to write in general.

B. Based on that target and coverage, would you feel comfortable drawing conclusions about student mastery based on their responses to the exercises included? Are all the important features of achievement covered?

> No. There is only a single sample of writing—a tall tale or fable. I would not feel comfortable about drawing a general conclusion about the writing ability of my students based on their having written only a single tall tale or fable. However, if this piece of writing were part of a set of writing that covered a range of types of writing, for various audiences and purposes, then it might work. But, in this case, the assessment activity itself is so weak that it wouldn't even be useful as one piece in a larger body of work, from which a more general conclusion could be drawn.

C. Do you see how you might reduce or increase the number of exercises included to more efficiently, yet still representatively, cover the required ground?

> Without a clear statement of the learning targets to be assessed it's difficult to state what to do to fix this assessment. If the target is general writing competence, see Section B above. If the target is to learn about tall tales and fables, this is not assessed at all; I'd have to start from scratch.

Rating: I would give this assessment a "1" on the trait of sampling.

Key 5: A sound assessment avoids distortion of scores due to bias.

A. Are the exercises (tasks, questions) of high quality, given the assessment method used?

The writing and retelling assessment tasks, as stated, are so vague as to be unusable. ("Alternative Assessments Used: Product; Unit Assessment List: Writing or Retelling a Tall Tale or Fable;" and "Develop and Write a Tall Tale or Fable.")

So, if this assessment has any use at all, it will be because of the performance criteria (see Section B below). And, realizing that sometimes portions of assessments (tasks or criteria or accompanying samples of student work), can be useful even if the whole assessment is not, I will push doggedly on.

B. If a performance assessment, are the scoring criteria of high quality?

The criteria are overbalanced in terms of mechanics. Even though the mechanics listed as important for grade two students appear reasonable.

Additionally, the portions of the criteria related to content—"Writing shows creativity in plot and character development; tall tale or fable uses exaggeration appropriately"—are very vague. What does "appropriate" look like? How will I (or my students) know when plot and character development are "creative"?

Further, the differences between levels (distinguished, proficient, apprentice, or novice) are not clearly defined. What is the difference between, for example, the "Distinguished" statement "uses exaggeration appropriately" and the "Proficient" statement "correctly uses plot and exaggeration?" Also, is the only difference between "Distinguished" and "Proficient" the degree of development of the characters? What happens if the characters are developed adequately and the exaggeration is a little off?

Along the same line, "Distinguished" says "writing is correct in all mechanics," while "proficient" says "few errors in mechanics are apparent." Do they really mean *all* mechanics. There can't be a single error? And what does "few" mean? Three? Do three misspellings of the same word count the same as three different words misspelled?

Finally, there are no samples of student work to illustrate what is meant. I'm totally on my own on this one.

Author's note: Given that the targets are unclear, the purposes are unstated, there is a serious alignment problem between targets/tasks/instruction/task/criteria, the task is unusable, and the criteria are weak, I would abandon this one and go no further. However, for the sake of this exercise, I will continue.

C. Do you notice anything else about the assessment under consideration that might have the effect of masking a student's actual level of achievement—the possibility of incorrect judgments being made by the evaluator; some characteristic of the student unrelated to achievement; some characteristic of the environment?

In order to really analyze the sources of bias and distortion, one needs to know the purpose of the assessment and what targets the assessment is trying to measure. Without that, as in this case, it is difficult to tell what the possible sources of bias and distortion might be. For example, if the target is understanding the genre, requiring students to write might be a biasing factor. Perhaps the student could adequately demonstrate knowledge of the genre by orally presenting a tall tale or fable or by describing what tall tales and fables are and giving examples. There is so much unclarity in this assessment, it is impossible to list all the possible sources of bias and distortion.

D. Would all groups of students have an equal opportunity to perform well on this assessment if they had mastered the target(s) being assessed?

See above.

Rating: I would give this assessment a "1" on the trait of bias and distortion.

Overall Judgment

Very weak. I would give this assessment a "1" on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is weak and 5 is strong.

TEACHER'S CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Entry Form

Lead Developer: Colleen Arthur

Address: Eatonville Elementary School
P.O. Box 669
Eatonville, WA 98328

Phone: (360) 832-3301

1. Identify the achievement target(s) you intended to assess below. Please attach a one-page description as specified.

   - ☒ Reading (attach a description of the reading proficiencies sampled)
   - ☐ Writing (attach description of the kind(s) of writing assessed and the criteria used to judge quality)
   - ☐ Communication (attach a description of the achievement target assessed)
   - ☐ Mathematics (attach a description of the math reasoning assessed)

2. Specify the assessment method(s) you used below. Please attach a copy of your assessment.

   - ☐ Selected response (multiple choice, true/false, matching, short answer fill-in)
   - ☐ Essay (exercise requiring written response)
   - ☐ Performance assessment (observation and evaluation of performance or product)
   - ☒ Personal communication (direct interaction between student and teacher)

3. Please attach a one-page written commentary on the quality of your assessment. In your own words, how do you know it was a sound assessment that provided accurate information about student achievement?

4. What method(s) did you use to communicate the results of the assessment to your intended user(s)? Please attach a brief description of them, along with your impressions of how effectively you communicated.

5. Please provide a one-page summary of how you used the assessment to enhance student achievement and include your evidence that the assessment ultimately did have a positive impact on learning.

Entry Checklist:
- ☒ Entry Form
- ☒ Target Description
- ☒ Copy of Assessment
- ☒ Commentary on Quality
- ☒ Communication Strategy
- ☒ Evidence of Impact

Mail to:
Rick Stiggins
Assessment Training Institute
50 SW 2nd Ave., Suite 300
Portland, OR 97204

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Deadline: November 1, 1997

2.2
level

Beau
10/97

BE CAREFUL, RUTH!

Written by Page Turner

30
-1
29
wpm

It all started when the rain began. I ~~ran~~ raced across the playground and started to ~~slip~~ slide sc ok on a wet spot. 20

"Watch out, Ruth!" Kathy yelled, but it was 28
too late. I slid into her and she landed in a water 40
puddle. 41

When I got to my class, I fed the hamster. I 52
fed Sam, the bird, too. 57

"Oh no," Kathy said. "You fed the snake 66
food to Birdie." 68

2.2nd level

BE CAREFUL, RUTH!

Written by Page Turner

Sharon
10/97

105
-2
103
wpm

It all started when the rain began. I ran across the 20

playground and started to slip on a wet space ~~spot~~. 28

"Watch out, Ruth!" Kathy yelled, but it was too 40

late. I slid into her and she landed in the ~~a~~ water puddle. 41

When I got to my class, I fed the hamster. I fed 52

Sam, the bird, too. 57

"Oh no," Kathy said. "You fed the snake food to 66

Birdie." 68

120

“Oh,” I said. “The boxes look just the same. 77
Ruth shook her head. “Can’t you read the letters? H 86
is for hamster. B is for bird. 94

At recess, Mrs. Rader wouldn’t let us go outside. 102
105
“You’ll get/rain in your sneakers,” she said. We 110
played dodgeball in the gym. The ball bounced off 119
my head. 123

Dean said, “I’m glad you’re not on my team.” 132

And Kathy said, “Can’t you even see the ball?” 140

Then it was time for story sharing. “Would you 141
like to be first, Ruth?" said Mrs. Rader. 149

"My book is *Loveable Lucy*,” I said. I held up 158
my paper and squinted to see the words. “This book 168
is about a cat named Lucy. She’s delightful and 178
funny.” 187

“Perfect,” said Mrs. Rader. 188

121 192

October 1996

Dear Parents,

As part of the first quarter assessment of your child, I checked your child to see how many words per minute he/she could read using a story at the **second grade level**. The story was "The Bremen Town Musicians" from the book Going Places.

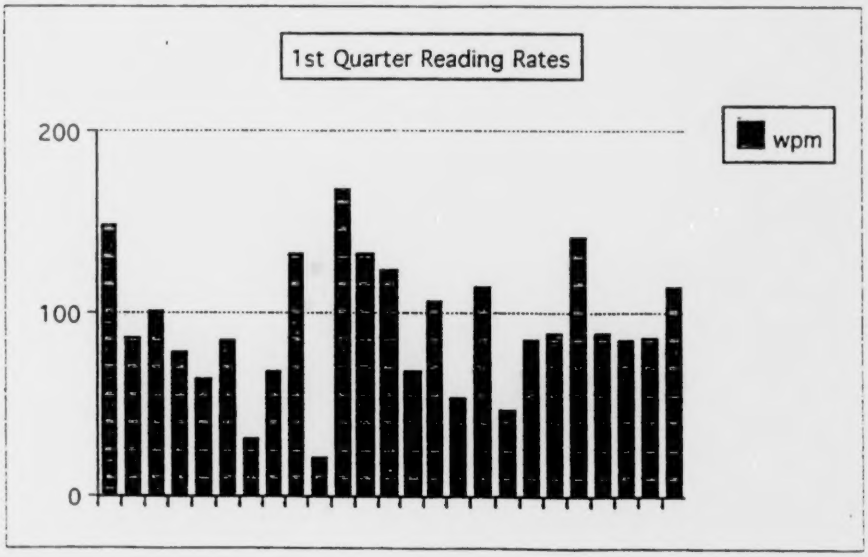
Research shows that when an individual can read at a rate of 150-200 wpm, they are reading proficiently and will comprehend at a high rate. Students should be able to reach that goal by the end of 5th grade. The goal for 2nd graders is 80 wpm, and **the goal for 3rd grade students will be to read 110 wpm at the 3rd grade level.** It only makes sense that the more at ease we are in reading, the more we will understand what we have read.

Next quarter your child will again be tested, but at the 3rd grade level instead of the 2nd grade.

Please read your child's results and see where they are and how they compare with his/her peers. Oral reading at home will greatly improve your child's reading rate.

___________ *is currently reading 2nd grade material at a rate of*

_________ *wpm.*



January 1997

Dear Parents,

I hope you saved the reading rate graph from last quarter so you can see the big jump in reading rates. This is so exciting.

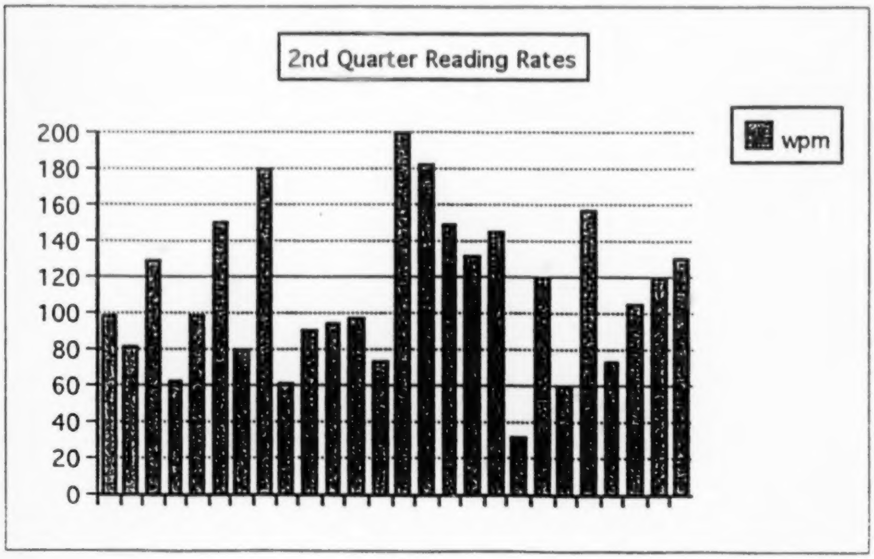
Your child was tested last week on "Tim to the Rescue", a story that comes from our third grade reading book. Please remember that last quarter your child was tested at the 2nd grade level, however this quarter he/she was tested at a 3rd grade reading level.

Please remember our goal is to read 110 words per minute. As you can see there is quite a range; from a child reading 32 wpm, all the way to another child reading 200 wpm.

How can you the parent/guardian help? Keep reading...the more the better. Also make sure you have your child reading appropriate material, not too easy or too hard. How can I help? We read in here all day long... Let me know if there is anything I can do to help you.

_______________is currently reading 3rd grade material at a rate of

_________wpm.



April 1997

Dear Parents,

Your child was tested last week on the story "The Recital" a story that every child has read twice. It is a story that comes from our third grade reading book.

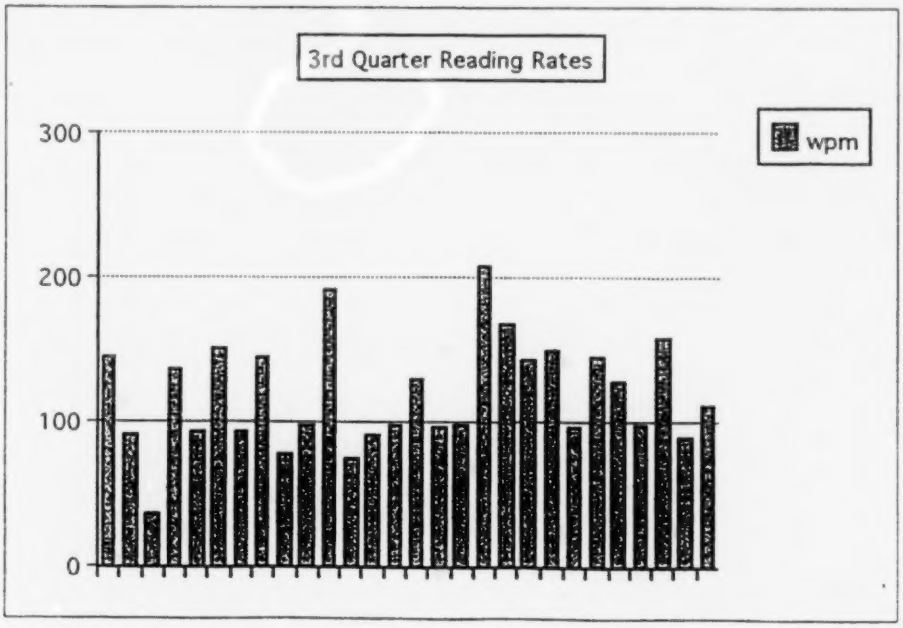
Please remember that our goal is to read 110 words per minute by the end of the year. As you can see we have quite a range from 37 words per minute, all the way to 208 words per minute.

Who has it easier in school? Yep, you got it...those who can read at a good rate have a much easier time, it only makes sense. Those of you who faithfully listen to your child or read with your child, pat yourself on the back. I applaud you.

Keep reading with your child this quarter. Let's see what % of our class can make that 110 word goal.

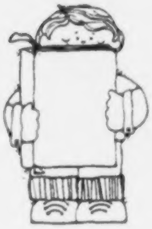
________is currently reading 3rd grade material at a rate of

______words per minute



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Checklist of Assessment Quality
Reading Rate Assessment



Title of Assessment: *Be Careful, Ruth!*

Intended Grade Level: Grade 3-5

Key 1: A sound assessment arises from a clear and appropriate achievement target.

A. Has the developer of the assessment being evaluated clearly specified the achievement targets that are supposed to be reflected in the exercises?

Yes, the target is clearly stated as being reading rate. The developer even gives a specific reading rate and the formula for determining rate—number of words read in a minute minus any words read incorrectly. It is stated, selective, and everyone would interpret the target the same.

My only question relates to importance. Is reading rate the most important thing to assess in reading? Is it the only thing she assesses in reading? Is it worth the time devoted to it? What about comprehension? The developer's assertion about the relationship between reading rate and comprehension is probably true, but one might read pretty fast in Spanish and not understand much. So, there *may* be a problem in the mix and relative emphasis of targets. For an overall evaluation of how this teacher assesses reading, I would want to ask some follow-up questions.

But, since the assessment developer was not asked to provide an overall statement of how she assesses reading, I can't really ding her for what's *not* there. So, all in all, I'd have to say that it's a thumbs up—the target is clear and important.

B. Compare the intended targets of the assessment under consideration to your needs. How do they match up?

So far, I can see that this might be a useful assessment for me to use. So, I'll continue.

Rating: I would give this assessment a "3/4" on the trait of clear and appropriate targets, on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is low and 5 is high. Although this target is very clear, I have some questions about it's importance (appropriateness). Does this target represent the best thinking in the field on what is important to accomplish with students in reading? If the answer to this question is "yes" then I'd raise my rating.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Key 2: A sound assessment serves a clearly articulated purpose.

A. Did the developer of the assessment under consideration specify its intended purposes (users and uses)?

Although the assessment developer didn't specifically list users and uses, it is fairly easy to figure it out from the materials included, especially the letters to the parents. The intended purposes appear to be to: (a) help the teacher continuously track student progress toward a well-defined target—110 words a minute; and (b) keep parents informed of the progress of their children about their ability to read grade-appropriate material. In this case, ability to read is measured by reading rate. The users and uses are focused and clear.

The only question is whether there might be other important users and uses. What about the students themselves? Would it be useful for students to measure and track their own reading rates? Do they know the importance of rate? Do they know the target rate?

Also, is the developer sure that the graph, as given, is the best way to communicate with parents? Will they understand it? Is it useful to have every single student listed separately? Might some sort of summary statistic (like the average for the class) be useful? Or maybe the teacher could graph the percentage of students meeting the standard and the percent not meeting it.

B. Can this assessment serve your intended purposes?

There is definitely enough here to warrant use if I wanted to assess reading rate and communicate that information to parents.

Key 2b: A sound assessment can be connected directly to student learning.

A. If you use this assessment, are you confident that the results will suggest to you what to do next to enhance student learning?

This would give me a good idea of reading rate that I could continuously monitor over time to determine if my students were meeting my well defined target. So, yes, I would get good information from this assessment. (If the questions in previous sections were answered to my satisfaction.)

B. Is it clear to you how this assessment might help you communicate with others about student achievement?

This is probably the strongest part of the entire assessment. The developer has made it very clear what the target is and has set up procedures for continuous reporting to parents. The graphing procedure might be modified to enhance clarity (as mentioned above), but the overall idea and execution is fairly sound.

B. Is it clear to you how you might involve students with this assessment as a way to help them:

- See and understand your intended achievement target(s)?
- Practice hitting that target?
- See themselves growing in their achievement over time?
- Communicate effectively with others about their success as learners?

The developer does not mention using the assessment in this way, but I can certainly see how it might be used like this if students were to monitor their own rates, track progress over time, and describe that progress to their parents.

Rating: I would give this assessment a "4" on the trait of clear and appropriate users and uses. The teacher and parents are, of course, appropriate users of the information. What about students? (Although the developer didn't mention that use, I could readily see how I might use it with students.) Also, I have questions about the format in which the information is presented to parents. If the teacher did demonstrate that parents understand and appreciate this reporting format (out of several possibilities) then I would raise my rating.

Key 3: A sound assessment relies on an appropriate assessment method.

A. Are you clear about why the developer of the assessment under consideration chose the particular assessment method(s) used? Does the selection of that method make sense to you given the targets and purposes?

It is clear that the developer picked the best procedure for assessing reading rate—performance assessment. If one wants to see how fast a student can read, the best way to tell is to have them read something and time it.

The developer has also provided a reasonable rationale for the method chosen. My only question would be whether the formula for reading rate should be total read in one minute minus number of words read incorrectly. Are there other formulas? Other miscues that might be taken into account?

B. Do the targets specified for the assessment, the assessment tasks or exercises, and the scoring criteria used to evaluate performance all reflect the same thing—are they aligned?

Yes. The alignment is good. It is clear how the target is carried through to the assessment task, scoring system, and use. The developer is very aware of what she is doing and why she is doing it.

Rating: I would give this assessment a "4" on the trait of target-method match. Certainly to assess reading rate, timing students is the most appropriate method. My only question would be about the formula used to calculate rate. If, indeed, the literature says that this is the way to do it, then I would raise my score.

Key 4: A sound assessment provides an appropriate sample of achievement.

A. Is it clear to you how the exercises (tasks, questions) included in the assessment under consideration cover the domain of achievement that falls within the target?

I don't know that the reading rate activity described covers the domain of achievement implied by the target. It appears that the developer relies on a single one-minute sample of a single reading selection. Might there be other types of texts, besides stories, on which the teacher might want to look at rate? Might the average rate over a three or more minute sample result in a more stable measure of rate?

B. Based on that target and coverage, would you feel comfortable drawing conclusions about student mastery based on their responses to the exercises included? Are all the important features of achievement covered?

Certainly the single sample reported in the materials is one good measure, but I'm not convinced that the sample is adequate to make a definitive statement about reading rate. This assessment, as stated, might be one good measure of rate, which, when combined with others, might provide a stable estimate of overall reading rate.

Additionally, I still have a lingering question about the role of reading rate in reading comprehension. If the real goal of the assessment is to provide an estimate of reading comprehension using reading rate as a surrogate measure, then the method and sample described is probably not enough to draw a conclusion about comprehension. For example, there is a high degree of relationship between scores on a multiple-choice language arts test and scores on a writing sample. Thus, some would argue that the multiple-choice test is an adequate surrogate measure of ability to write. Which is OK as long as the test doesn't become the curriculum. If the skills on the test become the only targets of instruction then the test no longer be an adequate surrogate for the larger domain of ability to write coherent prose. Likewise, if reading rate is to become the target of instruction (because that is what is assessed), then it might no longer be a good surrogate measure of reading comprehension. As I said before, if I know that my competence in reading Spanish is how fast I can read it, then I'll go for speed; but, that doesn't mean I understand what I read.

Remember, I'm not saying that this *is* an issue with this assessment, only that it *might* be, so further scrutiny of the teacher's reading assessment methods is in order.

C. Do you see how you might reduce or increase the number of exercises included to more efficiently, yet still representatively, cover the required ground?

See above.

Rating: I would give this assessment a "2" on the trait of sampling.

Key 5: A sound assessment avoids distortion of scores due to bias.

A. Are the exercises (tasks, questions) of high quality, given the assessment method used?

The task is certainly clear and aligns with the target. I just have one question with respect to the task—how did the developer determine that the selection to be read was at the second (or third) grade level? If the determination of level of reading passage is off, then reading rate will be affected. If the selection is too easy, then reading rate might be too high; if the selection is too hard, then reading rate might be too low.

B. If a performance assessment, are the scoring criteria of high quality?

This assessment attempts to measure a fairly straightforward target, so long, extensive rubrics are not needed—simple target, simple assessment; complex target, complex assessment. So, the procedure for determining rate is certainly reasonable. However, I'd still like to do a little more research on the formula used to determine rate. Is total number of words read in one minute minus number of words read incorrectly the commonly accepted way to determine reading rate?

C. Do you notice anything else about the assessment under consideration that might have the effect of masking a student's actual level of achievement—the possibility of incorrect judgments being made by the evaluator; some characteristic of the student unrelated to achievement; some characteristic of the environment?

The developer seems unaware of possible sources of bias and distortion. Does she pick times of day that will let students do their best? Are students at ease when they do their assessment? I'm not saying that any of these are necessarily the case, only that they aren't addressed. If the developer were to tackle such issues directly, then I'd be much more assured that she has thought through some of these issues and taken them into account.

D. Would all groups of students have an equal opportunity to perform well on this assessment if they had mastered the target(s) being assessed?

There doesn't seem to be any biasing factors except maybe the familiarity of the topic in the story. Does the developer have a list of grade level book that the students can choose from?

Rating: I would give this assessment a "4" on the trait of bias and distortion. I would raise my score if procedures for determining the appropriateness of the reading materials were stated and if the developer showed an awareness of possible sources of bias and distortion. All, in all, although there might be some potential sources of bias and distortion, there is enough here to use. If I were to use this assessment, I might want to corroborate the developer's conclusion on the formula and level of books, and supplement the list of selections students can read.

Overall Judgment

There is definitely enough here to warrant additions and use. The overall idea is good, the communication aspects are strong, the procedures are clear, and the potential for student involvement is great. I'd like to see more justification for the procedures used, more attention given to sampling, and more of an idea how this fits into a whole program for assessing reading. I'd give it a "3/4" on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is weak and 5 is strong.

TEACHER'S CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Entry Form

Lead Developer: Anna Lipski

Address: Grossmont High School
P. O. Box 1043; 1100 Murray Drive
La Mesa, CA 91944

Phone: (619) 460-5510 ext. 321

1. Identify the achievement target(s) you intended to assess below. Please attach a one-page description as specified.

__ Mastery of content knowledge (attach an outline of the content sampled)
__ Ability to use knowledge to reason and solve problems (attach description of kind(s) of reasoning assessed)
X Performance skills (describe skills to be demonstrated and attach description of the criteria or standards that serve as the basis for evaluation)
X Ability to create products that meet standards of quality (describe the product and attach criteria)

2. Specify the assessment method(s) you used below. Please attach a copy of your assessment.

__ Selected response (multiple choice, true/false, matching, short answer fill-in)
__ Essay (exercise requiring written response)
X Performance assessment (observation and evaluation of performance or product)
__ Personal communication (direct interaction between student and teacher)

3. Please attach a one-page written commentary on the quality of your assessment. In your own words, how do you know it was a sound assessment that provided accurate information about student achievement?

4. What method(s) did you use to communicate the results of the assessment to your intended user(s)? Please attach a brief description of them, along with your impressions of how effectively you communicated.

5. Please provide a one-page summary of how you used the assessment to enhance student achievement and include your evidence that the assessment ultimately did have a positive impact on learning.

Entry Checklist:
X Cover sheet
X Target description
X Copy of assessment
X Commentary on quality
X Communication strategy
X Evidence of Impact

Mail to:
Rick Stiggins
Assessment Training Institute
50 SW 2nd Ave., Suite 300
Portland OR 97204

TEACHER'S CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT
RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Lead Developer: Anna Lipski

I. Identify the achievement target(s) you intended to assess below. Please attach a one-page description as specified.

The purpose of this assessment is to simulate as closely as possible the job application and interview process. Student assessment is based on several criteria. Each student prepares a cover letter, resume, and follow-up letter. They also complete a job application form. These documents are submitted to the instructor; each must be error free and contain specific information. Business people who have experience in the human resource field conduct mock interviews on the Grossmont High School campus during the first semester final examination period. A few weeks before the interview assessment, all materials mentioned above, a rubric to use for evaluation, and a schedule are mailed to the interviewers.

On the day of the interview, the library is converted into the Human Resources Department of a large company. Students must report to the "company" at least ten minutes before their interview, dressed in appropriate business attire. Student receptionists facilitate the process by introducing students to the appropriate interviewer and performing any other tasks which need to be done.

Approximately 20 minutes is allotted for the complete interview process. When the student's interview is over, the interviewer gives the student immediate feedback regarding his/her interview and materials, including why (s)he would or would not be hired. The interviewer then completes the Interview Rating Sheet and returns it with the student's documents to the receptionist. The student also completes an evaluation of the class which includes questions specifically about this assessment and returns to the classroom to write a personal thank you note to the interviewer.

ACHIEVEMENT TARGETS:

Prepare error-free job application documents:
- cover letter
- resume
- application form
- follow-up letter

Take an employment screening test

Participate in a job interview
- Use good communication skills
- Answer questions appropriately
- Demonstrate self-confidence
- Dress appropriately

211

Name______________
Period____
Row____

RUBRIC FOR RESUME

Personal information has been included:			
Name, address, phone number			
Objective is clear and well stated			
Education			
Name of schools and special training			
Courses relating to position sought			
GPA if helpful			
Work Experience			
Full name of each company			
City and State where company is located			
Job title			
Month and year you began employment			
Month and year you left			
Specific results (use action words)			
Specific accomplishments (use action words)			
Activities			
Clubs			
Offices you have held			
Sports you have played			
Honors and Awards			
Specific name of award and date			
Special Skills			
Keyboarding, operating specific computers, knowledge of various computer programs, operating specific machinery and equipment, bilingual			
References			
None listed on your resume			
Available upon request			
Resume is			
Typed in attractive format			
Correct in every detail			
Printed on quality paper			
Limited to one page			

Name______________________
Period_______
Row_______

RUBRIC FOR APPLICATION LETTER

Letter includes applicant's
- Street address
- City, State Zip
- Date written out
- Followed by 3 blank lines

- Full name of person to receive letter
- Title of person, if known
- Name of company
- Address
- City, State Zip
- Followed by a double space

- Salutation including addressee's name
- Followed by a :
- Followed by a double space

Letter:
- Opens with a strong, positive statement about applicant or his qualifications
- or
- Opens with a statement naming a person known by the addressee who advised the applicant of available position
- Highlights the best items from applicant's background which directly qualifies him for the job
- States why applicant wants to work for this organization
- Requests an interview
- Suggest how applicant will follow-up or where he can be reached to schedule an interview
- Includes a proper closing followed by a comma
- Closing followed by four hard returns
- Applicant's full real name is typed below closing
- Applicant signed letter in ink between the closing and his name
- Letter is one page
- Sentences and paragraphs are short and easy to read
- No misspelled words or grammar errors
- Printed on high-quality paper

213

APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

Referred By

Qualified applicants are considered for all positions without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital or veteran status, or the presence of a non-job related medical condition or handicap.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

		Social Security Number		Application Date
Last Name	First Name	Middle Initial		Telephone Number
Present Address	No. and Street	City	State	
Permanent Address	No. and Street	City	State	
If you are not a citizen of the United States, please indicate your authorization to be employed.		Military Service Status		Draft Classification Status

EMPLOYMENT DESIRED

	Date You Can Start	Salary Desired
Position(s) applied for	Are you currently employed?	If so, may we contact your present employer?
If you have applied to this company before, please indicate where and when.	If you have relatives employed by this company, please give names.	
If you have ever worked for this company before, please indicate when and position held.	Do you seek full or part-time employment?	Shift or hours preferred
Do you have special skills, experience or qualifications related to the position(s) applied for?	Do you have any physical limitations which would hinder your performance in the position applied for?	

Last Name

First Name

Middle Name

SPECIAL QUESTIONS

DO NOT ANSWER ANY OF THE QUESTIONS IN THIS FRAMED AREA UNLESS THE EMPLOYER HAS CHECKED A BOX PRECEDING A QUESTION, THEREBY INDICATING THAT THE INFORMATION IS REQUIRED FOR A BONA FIDE OCCUPATIONAL QUALIFICATION, OR DICTATED BY NATIONAL SECURITY LAWS, OR IS NEEDED FOR OTHER LEGALLY PERMISSIBLE REASONS.

☐ Height ______ feet ______ inches

☐ Citizen of U.S. ______ Yes ______ No

☐ Weight ______ lbs.

☐ ____

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT

Please Explain Any Gap in Employment History Below

Please List Most Recent Employment First		Name and Location	Position	Salary	Reason For Leaving
1	From				Reason For Leaving
	To				
2	From				Reason For Leaving
	To				
3	From				Reason For Leaving
	To				
4	From				Reason For Leaving
	To				

214

PLEASE TURN OVER

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

LANGUAGES SPOKEN

SCHOOL LEVEL	NAME AND LOCATION OF SCHOOL	Years* Attended	Date* Graduated	SUBJECTS STUDIED/MAJORS
GRAMMAR SCHOOL				
HIGH SCHOOL				
COLLEGE				
TRADE BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL				

PERSONAL REFERENCES

PLEASE LIST 3 NON-RELATIVES WHOM YOU HAVE KNOWN FOR AT LEAST ONE YEAR.

	NAME AND ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	RELATIONSHIP – YEARS KNOWN
1			
2			
3			

Case of Emergency NOTIFY: Name Address City State Zip C

I authorize investigation of all statements contained in this application. I understand that misrepresentation or omission of facts called for i cause for dismissal. Further, I understand and agree that my employment is for no definite period and may, regardless of the date of paymen of my wages and salary, be terminated at any time without any previous notice.

Date: Signature:

*The civil rights act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in employment because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Some states prohib discrimination because of age. The age discrimination in employment act of 1967 prohibits discrimination on the basis of age with respect t individuals who are at least 40 but less than 70 years of age. If this state prohibits the request of any information on this form, this informatio will not be used to discriminate against possible employment.

Interviewed By

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

Interview Date

REMARKS

NEATNESS		CHARACTER	
PERSONALITY		ABILITY	

Hired	Dept.	Position	Reporting Date	Salary/Wages

roved By	Employment Manager	Dept. Head	General Manager

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

HUMAN RESOURCE DIRECTOR'S MATERIALS

SAMPLE OF LETTER SENT TO INTERVIEWER

January 9, 1997

Ms. Carol Hanley, Human Resources
Union-Tribune
P. O. Box 191
San Diego, CA 92112

Dear Ms. Hanley:

Thank you for agreeing to help with our mock job interviews on Tuesday, January 21, from 10:15-12:15 and Thursday, January 23, from 10:15-12:15. We really appreciate your giving your time to help with this project. The time allotted should give you a few minutes to review the applicant's materials, conduct the interview, give feedback to the applicant, and complete the evaluation form.

Enclosed is a copy of a map of our school, directions to Grossmont, and sample questions. (Please feel free to use your own questions if you prefer). I have also enclosed the materials for the students you will be interviewing, which include a rating sheet, an application letter, a resume, an application form, and a follow-up letter.

Interviews will be held in the library. If you have a problem finding the room, Mrs. Ambrosia in the front office can direct you. We look forward to seeing you. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Anna Lipski

Enclosures:
- Map of school
- Directions to Grossmont
- Sample questions
- Rating sheet
- Application letters
- Resumes
- Follow-up letters

INTERVIEWER'S SCHEDULE
Tuesday, January 21, 1997, 10:15-12:15

Ms. Carol Hanley

10:20-10:40	Crystal Deardorff
10:40-11:00	Lorraine Hartt
11:00-11:20	Spencer Olson
11:20-11:40	Tung Tran
11:40-12:00	Charity Peregoy

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR JOB INTERVIEW

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What is your greatest strength?
3. What is your greatest weakness?
4. What do you see yourself doing in the next five to ten years? What is your long-term goal?
5. Why do you want to work for our company?
6. If you were the person doing the hiring, what qualities would you look for in an applicant for this position?
7. (Use this question only if student has had a previous job). What did you like about your last job?
8. (Use this question if student has not had previous work experience). What did you like best about school for describe your favorite class or teacher?
9. Give me one reason why I shouldn't hire you?
10. How would your best friend describe you?
11. Tell me something that is not on your resume.
12. (Use this question only if student has had a previous job). Have you ever disagreed with your boss? How did you handle it?
13. What have you learned from your extracurricular activities?
14. What is your greatest accomplishment? Describe it.
15. What is your greatest disappointment? How did you handle it?
16. What do you know about our organization?
17. How has your education prepared your for this job?
18. Define success.
19. What salary do you expect?
20. Tell me a story.
21. Do you have any questions for me?

ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS INTERVIEW RATING SHEET

Student's Name____Pd._____

LETTER OF APPLICATION AND RESUME	Possible Points	Points Received
Clear and concise presentation of facts with logical arrangement	10	________
Correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure	10	________
Acceptable typewritten format	10	________
JOB APPLICATION FORM		
Neatness and legibility	10	________
Attention to detail	10	________
FOLLOW-UP LETTER		
Correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure	15	________
Acceptable typewritten format	15	________
PERSONAL APPEARANCE		
Neat, clean hair (no extreme)	15	________
Suitable makeup and/or well-groomed	15	________
Neat, businesslike attire	55	________
INTERVIEW		
Proper greeting and introduction		10________
Poise and maturity		10________
Attitude and interest		10________
Communication skills (grammar, speech, voice)		10________
Demonstration of initiative, self-confidence, and assertiveness		10________
Appropriateness of answers		20________
Qualifications for job		20________
Career knowledge and career plans		15________
Eye contact		15________
Enthusiasm and friendliness		15________
Asked for business card		10________
Ended the interview with positive comment		10________
Would you hire this applicant?		30________
TOTAL		350________

PLEASE WRITE ANY COMMENTS AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS SHEET OR ON THE BACK AND RETURN IT TO THE RECEPTIONISTS; YOU DO NOT HAVE TO TOTAL IT.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENT SHEET

Interviewer's Name___________________________Company____________________

Thank you very much for donating your time to the students of Grossmont High School by conducting mock interviews. We appreciate your help very much. It will help us improve the program if you would please take a few minutes to make a few comments regarding these interviews. If you have any suggestions, please feel free to make them. Please leave this form with one of the receptionists or give to Mrs. Lipski.

1. Did you receive the student materials, map, and directions in time to review them?

2. Were the map of the school and the directions clear?

3. Did you have any trouble finding the parking lot or a parking spot once you located the lot?

4. Does the setup in the library simulate as closely as possible a real interview situation?

5. Did the students take the exercise seriously by answering questions in a professional manner?

6. Were the majority of them dressed appropriately for an interview?

7. Did you have enough time to complete the interview, give feedback, and complete the evaluation form?

8. Were the receptionists helpful? Did they conduct themselves in a professional manner?

9. Were the refreshments adequate? Do you have any suggestions for the future?

10. Would you be willing to help with this project again next year?

11. Do you have any other suggestions or comments about the mock interviews?

221

STUDENT'S MATERIALS

222

Receptionists' Duties

1. Introduce yourself to each interviewer.
2. Ask them if they would like you to bring the interviewees to them or if they prefer to get them themselves.
3. If interviewer wants you to bring the interviewees to them, be sure you introduce them properly.
4. Get the interviewers refreshments if they wish. (Refreshments are only for interviewers, not students.)
5. Ask the interviewers to return the completed packets to you. When the interviewer finishes with the packet for each student, please total it.
6. When students check in with you, give them an evaluation form.
7. Tell them to return it to you before they leave.
8. Check their names off the sheet when they return it.

(Optional)Name____________________________

Period__________

EVALUATION ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS
SEMESTER 1

(Use other side of page if you need more room for comments). The purpose of this evaluation is to improve the class. I appreciate your feedback and suggestions. I may not be able to incorporate everything you suggest, but I will try to do what is feasible. It is even more helpful when written comments are included.

On a scale from 1-10 with 1 representing not very helpful and 10 being extremely helpful, rate the following items by circling a number. A blank line follows each item for a written comment.

Using the computer to prepare work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Spelling rules instead of lists.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Review for SAT test.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Grammar review.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Study of root words for vocab.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Tests composed of prev. worksheets.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Hall passes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Funny money--conduct sheets.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Men vs. Women review contests.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Essay writing/rewriting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Resume preparation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Letter of application	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Application form and follow-up	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Practicing interview questions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mock-interview in library	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Class was too easy, too difficult, or just right. (Circle one).

What I liked best about the class:______________________________

What I liked least about the class:______________________________

Suggestions for changes:____________________________________

I (would, would not) recommend this class to a friend.

3. Please attach a one-page written commentary on the quality of your assessment. In your own words, how do you know it was a sound assessment that provided accurate information about student achievement?

I have taught a job application skill unit in my English class for several years. Before I began this assessment process, students were not as interested in preparing the documents. At that time we simply discussed the interview process and how to answer difficult questions; they did not participate in a job interview.

Involving business people in the assessment and requiring each student to participate in a job interview has piqued the students' interest. They realize the documents they are preparing will be evaluated not only by me but also by their interviewer. Having the opportunity to interact with someone from the community who is knowledgeable about the hiring process makes the assessment more meaningful.

QUALITY OF THE ASSESSMENT:

Students

produce errorless documents.

receive feedback regarding documents from the instructor and a knowledgeable business person.

interact with one who is knowledgeable in the hiring process.

realize importance of good communication skills.

learn to emphasize their positive qualities.

increase self-confidence and poise.

prepare an electronic portfolio on computer disk which facilitates future use.

understand the entire job application process.

Students evaluate the class and the assessment.

Interviewers evaluate the assessment.

4. What method(s) did you use to communicate the results of the assessment to your intended user(s)? Please attach a brief description of them, along with your impressions of how effectively you communicated.

Students received immediate feedback from their interviewer about their documents and their interview at the end of the interview. After the interviewers completed the evaluation form, they returned the documents (cover letter, resume, follow-up letter, application form, and evaluation sheet) to the receptionists. When the student returned to the classroom, I met with each student individually to discuss the evaluation. The student then wrote a personal thank you note to the interviewer, mentioning at least one comment the interviewer had made and how (s)he would use it in the future. I think my communication of the results to each student was extremely effective. Discussing the assessment immediately following the event gives the student an opportunity to ask questions or clarify points which (s)he might not have understood.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY:

Students discussed interview with

interviewer

instructor

5. Please provide a one-page summary of how you used the assessment to enhance student achievement and include your evidence that the assessment ultimately did have a positive impact on learning.

As mentioned in a previous narrative, I have taught a job application skill unit in my English class for several years. However, before I began the interview assessment, students were not as interested in preparing the documents. Involving business people in the assessment and requiring each student to participate in a job interview has piqued the students' interest. Being told by an interviewer that one did an excellent job in presenting him/herself and that he/she would be hired has a positive impact on learning.

Student feedback about this assessment has been gratifying. Several students have said that it is one of the most valuable things they have learned in high school. Many of the students who register for this class indicate they did so because they wanted to learn these skills. Parents often call or write letters thanking me for teaching these skills.

After completing this assessment students have more self-confidence and poise. They will apply for jobs in which the competition is keen and attribute their success in getting the job to the interviewing skills they have learned. The community interviewers are impressed with the quality of the students' documents and their presentation of themselves during the interview. As one interviewer commented most recently, "I would hire this student `in a heartbeat.'"

Another example of the success of this assessment has been placement of students in State and National competitions. I am the advisor of the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) at Grossmont High School, and each year members of our Chapter compete in various academic events. The first level of competition is the Section and includes students from high schools all over Southern California. The Job Interview Event requires students to prepare a cover letter, resume, and job application form which are submitted prior to the competition. After these documents are evaluated, only 10 students from approximately 100 applicants are chosen to participate in the next phase, the job interview. If a student places in the top three in Section competition, (s)he advances to the State level. The first place winner in the State competition represents his/her state at the National competition. Grossmont has won the honor of representing California for the past three years. Two Grossmont students have been national winners, receiving a second and a third place award.

The last assessment was featured on Channel 8's "Cool School" series. TV crews from Channel 8 interviewed students and business people, asking their opinion regarding the value of the assessment. The responses were very positive. The enclosed videotape contains the "Cool School" segment.

Checklist of Assessment Quality[1]
Interview Assessment

Title of Assessment: Job Interview Assessment

Intended Grade Levels: High School

Key 1: Sound assessment arises from clear and appropriate achievement targets.

A. Has the developer of the assessment being evaluated clearly specified the achievement targets that are supposed to be reflected in the exercises?

> Yes. The author clearly identifies that she is trying to assess job application documents (products) and job interview skills (communication, self-confidence, and appropriate dress). The statement of targets is almost a "good." The developer tends to mix up tasks with targets. For example, under "Achievement Targets" the developer lists: "participate in a job interview" when she means "develop job interview skills." Also, statements of targets are scattered throughout. They need to be better organized.
>
> The assessments *do* assist me to understand the nature of the targets being assessed and add needed detail to make the targets clearer. The criteria especially help me to understand the specific skills to be developed.

B. Compare the intended targets of the assessment under consideration to your needs. How do they match up?

> Some match. The assessment represents only one audience and purpose for oral communication—not the range required in most oral communication standards. So, depending on the context, it might be what I need. For example, if I were teaching a business class, or something having to do with school-to-work, this assessment would assist me to help students develop communication skills related to important content standards in the context of my class. This might then contribute to a cross-disciplinary collection of work that could be used to demonstrate mastery on the communication standards in general. Performance on just this single assessment would not provide enough evidence to judge overall mastery of the communication standards; thus there might be a sampling problem—see Key #4.

Rating: I would give this one a "4/5" on clear targets on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is low and 5 is high.

---

[1] Adapted from materials prepared by Judy Arter and Rick Stiggins for the Washington Commission on Student Learning, March 1998.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Key 2a: A sound assessment serves a clearly articulated purpose.

A. Did the developer of the assessment under consideration specify its intended purposes (users and uses)?

Yes. The purpose of the assessment is to "simulate as closely as possible the job application and interview process" (page 2, first paragraph) so that students will be more motivated to do a good job preparing interview materials (p.17, paragraphs 1 and 2). The implication is that students will learn more if they "realize the documents they are preparing will be evaluated not only by me but also by their interviewer. Having the opportunity to interact with someone from the community who is knowledgeable about the hiring process makes the assessment more meaningful" (p. 17, paragraph 2).

These are essentially instructional and learning purposes. The biggest problem with the assessment write-up is organizational. The reader has to figure out purposes from statements scattered throughout the write-up. The same is true of targets.

B. Can this assessment serve your intended purposes?

Yes, especially if my purposes were instructional. There is definitely enough here to keep going with the review.

Key 2b: A sound assessment can be connected directly to student learning.

A. If you use this assessment, are you confident that the results will suggest to you what to do next to enhance student learning?

Yes. The developer documented the reasons for changes in instruction/assessment and the impact these changes have had on students (p. 18). If students did poorly I would know that they would need more practice on the skills in the criteria.

B. Is it clear to you how this assessment might help you communicate with others about student achievement?

The communication aspects of this assessment are strong. Students get immediate feedback. They have an opportunity to critique the experience. I can see that this assessment will have positive consequences for students.

The performance criteria help extensively in this regard, especially if they were linked to the suggestions in "C" below.

C. Is it clear to you how you might involve students with this assessment as a way to help them:

- See and understand your intended achievement target(s)?
- Practice hitting that target?
- See themselves growing in their achievement over time?
- Communicate effectively with others about their success as learners?

Yes. Even though the developer has not done so, I can see that I might enhance student achievement to an even greater extent by:

(1) Asking students to "recreate" (or add to) the criteria for quality by looking at previous samples of student job applications and video clips of interviews.

(2) Asking students to critique the job applications or video clip interviews of other students.

(3) Asking students to practice, with feedback from myself and their peers.

(4) Asking students to keep track of their performance over time and analyze how first attempts are different from current attempts.

(5) Report the analysis to others.

These procedures would help students see and understand the intended achievement targets, practice hitting the targets, and self-assess. They would probably also help the student be more confident in the job interview and knowledgeably discuss the criteria by which they will be judged.

Rating: I would give this assessment a "4/5" on the trait of clear and appropriate users and uses.

Key 3: A sound assessment relies on an appropriate assessment method.

A. Are you clear about why the developer of the assessment under consideration chose the particular assessment method(s) used? Does the selection of that method make sense to you given the targets and purposes?

> Yes, the developer is very clear on this point. In order to have a good assessment in this case, real life has to be simulated as closely as possible. This means that the assessment is not only performance-based, but set in as realistic a context as possible by having real business people review real application materials and conduct mock interviews with students, and then discuss with the students whether they would have been hired or not. The only thing more realistic would be to participate in an actual job interview.

B. Do the targets specified for the assessment, the assessment tasks or exercises, and the scoring criteria used to evaluate performance all reflect the same thing—are they aligned?

> Yes, except for considerations under Key #5B, described below. Specifically, the scoring criteria need some work to really reflect the achievement target. But, there is enough here to warrant revision and use.

Rating: I would give this assessment a "5" on the trait of target-method match.

Key 4: A sound assessment provides an appropriate sample of achievement.

A. Is it clear to you how the exercises (tasks, questions) included in the assessment under consideration cover the domain of achievement that falls within the target?

A job interview is only one small piece of the "various audiences and purposes" implied by most oral communication content standards. Therefore, if the purpose of the assessment is to demonstrate competence on communication standards in general, this assessment is not enough. However, if the course in which the assessment is embedded is business related, the domain is covered pretty well. Context is everything.

Additionally, I would feel better if the students had practice opportunities before the "real" one. One sample of performance, sink or swim, might not accurately represent what a student can do.

B. Based on that target and coverage, would you feel comfortable drawing conclusions about student mastery based on their responses to the exercises included? Are all the important features of achievement covered?

See comments in Section A.

C. Do you see how you might reduce or increase the number of exercises included to more efficiently, yet still representatively, cover the required ground?

See Section A.

Rating: I would give this assessment a "3" on the trait of sampling.

Key 5: A sound assessment avoids distortion of scores due to bias.

A. Are the exercises (tasks, questions) of high quality, given the assessment method used?

Yes. It is clear what each person (student or interviewer) is to do.

B. If a performance assessment, are the scoring criteria of high quality?

The criteria are a good start, but could use a little work. First, the criteria for the application letter (p. 4). The list of things to be evaluated is a little daunting. Since many of the listed items seem to go together, I might want to group them into five general categories, or "traits":

1. **Content.** Does the letter cover what it needs to cover? Is information accurate? Has the applicant done his or her homework? Does the letter cover the skills needed for the job? This trait would include the items with a "1" next to them.
2. **Voice/style/flair/penetrability.** Is the letter written in such a way that the interviewer wants to read it. Does it have a professional, earnest, sincere voice? This would include the item with a "2" next to it. But, more would need to be added to really fill out this trait.
3. **Organization.** Is the letter organized well? Currently there are no items in the developer's criteria that relate to organization.
4. **Format/presentation.** Is this, in fact, a job application letter? Does it have the proper format, opening, etc.? This trait would include all items with a "4" next to them. In fact, the criteria, as listed, are very heavy on format. Is this the emphasis we want?
5. **Mechanics/conventions.** Is the letter free of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar errors? This would include the item with a "5" next to it. Might there also be other conventions to look for, such as paragraphing, capitalization, and punctuation?

Second, it seems that the criteria for the trait of content might be limiting and might result in some good letters being called "bad." For example, the criteria only allow two possible openings for the letter. What if neither of these is appropriate for the particular job being applied for? Or what happens if the student comes up with a very catchy, yet highly appropriate, way to begin? Thus, the trait of "content" might need to be reworked.

Finally, will all raters agree on the score (1-3) for these traits? Is it possible that one person might think that, for example, the applicant has "highlighted the best items from the applicant's background which directly qualifies him or her for the job" while another person thinks he or she has not? Since the intent is instructional, will *students* understand what to include?

Now for the criteria for the **business interview** (p. 11). Again, these are a good start, but also could use a little work. First, the criteria for "letter of application and resume" include organization, conventions, and format, but do not include content or style, as do the criteria the teacher and students use. Also, I'm concerned that the interviewer might be somewhat adrift on how to assign points. Do we care if the number of points the student gets depends on the interviewer?

All the unclarities noted above would be helped by having samples of student letters, and maybe video clips of interviews, that illustrate the criteria. Maybe a panel of business folks could be persuaded to work together for a day to agree on some "anchors." This would be especially important if the assessment is to help students learn and, perhaps, even to understand the differences and vagaries among job classifications and interviewers.

C. Do you notice anything else about the assessment under consideration that might have the effect of masking a student's actual level of achievement—the possibility of incorrect judgments being made by the evaluator; some characteristic of the student unrelated to achievement; some characteristic of the environment?

This assessment is pretty realistic, but a few things *might* mask ability. For example, as pointed out above, if the students have had no practice, nervousness might mask ability. Other possible sources of bias and distortion: unconscious rater bias due to gender, race, cultural differences or handicapping conditions.

But, in general, I feel that if students had mastered the relevant content standards, they would be able to perform well on this assessment.

D. Would all groups of students have an equal opportunity to perform well on this assessment if they had mastered the target(s) being assessed?

See Section C above.

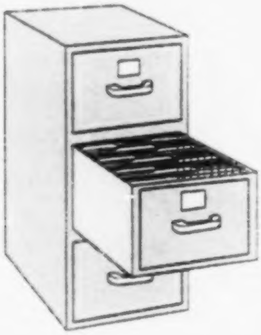
In general, this looks like an assessment that could be worked with to eliminate possible sources of bias and distortion.

Rating: I would give this assessment a "4" on the trait of bias and distortion.

Overall Judgment

Overall, with some modifications, I could use this assessment well. The major revision would relate to the criteria. I would give it a "4/5" on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is low and 5 is high.

Appendix C
References and Resources



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Clear Targets

A good source of different kinds of student learning targets can be found in documents produced by the Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory.

(a) http://www.mcrel.org

(b) Robert J. Marzano, 1996, "Understanding the Complexities of Setting Performance Standards," in Robert Blum and Judy Arter (Eds.), *Student Performance Assessment in an Era of Restructuring*, Section I, Article #6. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), (800) 933-2723. ISBN 0-87120-267-0

(c) John Kendall and Robert Marzano, *Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education*, 1997, McREL, (303) 337-0990

For skill standards used in career-technical education visit: http://www.nssb.org/ossp.html.

For other looks at what students need to know and be able to do, visit the following "content standards" sites: (a) http://www.lab.brown.edu/public/initsstandards.qry?fuction=search; (b) http://putwest.boces.org/Standards.html#Section 3; (c) http://ncrel.org/sdrs/pathways.htm; (d) http://www.sedl.org/standards; (e) http://www.ed.gov/office/OERI/SAI.

Educator Preparation for Student Assessment

J. R. Hills (1991). Apathy concerning grading and testing. *Phi Delta Kappa*, 72(7), 540-545.

Teachers lack skill in assessing students.

J.C. Impara, Barbara S. Plake, and J.J. Fager (1993). Teachers' assessment background and attitudes toward testing. *Theory into Practice*, 32(2), 113-117.

Teachers lack skill in assessing students.

Barbara S. Plake, J.C. Impara, and J.J. Fager (1993). Assessment competencies of teachers: A national survey. *Educational measurement: Issues and Practice*, 12(4), 10-12, 39.

Teachers lack skill in assessing students.

William D. Shafer (1993). Assessment in teacher education. *Theory into Practice*, 32(2), 118-126.

Teachers lack confidence in assessing students.

S.L. Wise, L.E. Lukin, and L.L. Roos (1991). Teacher beliefs about training in testing and measurement. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 42(1), 37-42.

Teachers lack confidence in assessing students.

Zhicheng Zhang (1997). Assessment Practices Inventory: A multivariate analysis of teachers' perceived assessment competency. Paper presented at NCME national conference, Chicago, 1997.

Teachers lack confidence in assessing students.

Effects of Assessment on Students and Instruction

H.D. Corbett and B.L. Wilson, *Testing, Reform, and Rebellio,* (1991). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.

The negative effects of multiple-choice tests on instruction.

Nidhi Khattri, Alison L. Reeve, and Rebecca J.. Adamson (1997). *Studies of Education Reform: Assessment of Student Performance*, Washington DC: U.S. Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

The positive impact of innovations in assessment on instruction and students.

Regional Educational Laboratories (1998). *Improving Classroom Assessment: A Toolkit for Professional Developers*, NWREL, 503-275-9500.

Additional (and longer) training activities that illustrate the effect of assessment on students.

Francine Stayter and Peter Johnston (1990). "Evaluating the Teaching and Learning of Literacy," in Timothy Shanahan, (Ed.), *Reading and Writing Together: New Perspectives for the Classroom,* Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

The ways that classroom assessment can affect students for better or worse.

Resources that Lend Themselves to Group Study on Assessment Topics

Peter Airasian (1991). *Classroom Assessment*, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Textbook on quality classroom assessment.

Judith A. Arter (1996). *Assessing Student Performance: An ASCD Professional Inquiry Kit*, ASCD, (800) 933-2723.

Designed for group study on performance assessment.

Robert J. Marzano and John S. Kendall (1996). *Designing Standards-Based Districts, Schools, and Classrooms*, McREL, (303) 337-0990.

Book on setting content standards and aligning instruction and assessment to them.

Rick Stiggins (1997). *Student Centered Classroom Assessment*. Prentice-Hall, (201) 236-7000. An accompanying group study guide is available from the Assessment Training Institute, 50 SW Second Ave., Suite 300, Portland, OR 97204, 503-228-3060.

Further reading on keys to quality assessment at the classroom level.

McTighe, J. (1996). Performance-based assessment in the classroom: A planning framework (Paper I-5). In R. Blum and J. Arter (Eds.), *Student performance assessment in an era of restructuring*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development.

How to develop performance assessments.

Technical Quality

Joan Herman (1996). "Technical Quality Matters," in Robert Blum and Judy Arter (Eds.), *Student Performance Assessment in an Era of Restructuring*, Section I, Article #7. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), (800) 933-2723. ISBN 0-87120-267-0.

Information on keys to quality assessment at the large-scale level.

Appendix D
Self-Assessment Developmental Continuums

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Key 1—Clear and Appropriate Student Learning Targets Self-Assessment Continuum

A person who is **skilled** at setting clear and appropriate learning targets knows and can easily articulate the skills and knowledges important for students to learn. Actions typical of such educators include:

- **Knowing local definitions** of such terms as **content standards**, **performance standards,** and **benchmarks**; providing examples; and comparing classroom/local standards to state/national standards.

- **Can**, without hesitating, **articulate learning goals**. For example, "I have a body of knowledge I want to impart to students, but I also want them to be strong problem solvers, good critical thinkers, have strong communication skills, and be able to work collaboratively."

- **Has *good* learning targets for students**. For example, "I emphasize five types of outcomes with my students: knowledge, reasoning, skills, products, and affect, and here are examples of these in the unit of instruction I am currently teaching." Responses demonstrate a good "mix" of learning targets from knowledge to thinking skills. The educator can state why these are outcomes of enduring importance.

- **Provides thorough descriptive details** about the student knowledge, skill, or ability associated with the learning targets. For example, if the learning target is becoming a fluent reader, a person who is skilled would be able to define what a fluent reader knows and is able to do. If the learning target is math problem solving, a skilled educator would be able to define and describe what good math problem solvers know and can do.

- **Understands how achievement targets in one's own setting lay the foundation** for students' success in later grades.

- **Explains to students, parents, and others**, in terms they can understand, which learning targets they hope to achieve in their instruction. They can spell it out so that students, parents, and others can accurately explain it back in their own words.

- **Describes the various levels** of student development toward the learning target. For example, the stages of development in becoming a fluent reader or a strong math problem solver. He or she can describe the appropriate level for the grade he or she teaches.

- **Identifies, in student work or actions,** these different levels of development toward the target. For example, a skilled educator knows the specific student words or actions that would indicate their level of reading fluency or their sophistication as a math problem solver. The skilled person can explain how he or she will know if students have accomplished the learning.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- **Models the skills that students are to master.** Is he or she a confident master of the achievement targets students are to master.

- Without hesitating **shows specifically where during instruction** each learning target is addressed and how a sequence of instructional activities develops the required knowledges and skills over time.

- **Begins with learner targets and plans instruction to achieve them**, rather than planning interesting instructional activities and then going back, if asked, to identify which learning targets were emphasized.

- **Links level of student mastery to an instructional plan** and explains how/why the instructional plan will improve achievement on the target. For example, what instructional experiences would one plan for a student to facilitate, in the most efficient manner possible, improvements in reading fluency or in the ability to solve math problems?

- **Has students who can** use precise and common terminology to describe the quality of their work, articulate the criteria for success, explain what the teacher expects them to learn, and describe how the work they're doing is applicable to their lives.

- **Has posted performance criteria** for things like writing, group skills, and critical thinking.

- **Teaches students** how to use performance criteria to self-assess and improve work.

A person who is **practiced** at having clear and appropriate learning targets knows what it takes to be a master of the targets of instruction, and can do many of the things listed above **with some help**. Actions and characteristics typical of such a person are:

- **Cannot readily define** words like **content standard, performance standard**, and **benchmark**, but can identify examples when the terms are defined for them.

- **Readily lists goals for students**, but sometimes mixes up goals with instructional activities. For example, saying that a goal for students is "literature" rather than saying, "Through the study of literature I want students to know x, y, and z, and be able to do a, b, and c." Or saying that a goal for students is "the research report on the Civil War," rather than saying, "Through doing the research report on the Civil War I want students to know d, e, and f, and be able to do m, n, and o."

- **Tries to explain** to students, parents, and others which learning targets they hope to achieve in their instruction, but either needs to stop and think about how to best explain it so that students, parents, and others can accurately explain it back in their own words, or sometimes is not entirely successful at the explanation.

- **Links specific learning targets to instructional activities** in general terms, but needs to stop and think about specifically where, in an instructional sequence, different learning targets are emphasized.

- **Plans instruction by identifying activities that would be engaging for students** and then goes back to identify which learning targets were emphasized.

- **Lists features of a quality performance**, but needs assistance to distinguish levels of performance. For example, a practiced educator states that a piece of writing needs to have voice, but needs assistance to articulate what *strong* or *weak* voice looks like.

- **States in broad terms the characteristics of strong or weak performance** (or levels of development), but needs assistance with the specifics and identifying instances and examples of student work or behavior. For example, needs assistance in identifying examples of strong and weak voice in student work, or identifying samples of student work that illustrate strong or weak critical thinking.

- **Uses checklists or other criteria** to judge the quality of student work, but has aspects of the process that sometimes don't work well. For example, consider a teacher who has as a criterion for a paper that it has a beginning, middle and end. Then *any* beginning, middle, and end should get the same credit. We've heard the following, for example: "I put a C on this paper, but the student convinced me it should be an A because after all she did have a beginning, middle, and end. I think it should be a C, but I really don't know why." In this case the teacher is emphasizing the presence or absence of a feature rather than recognizing the need for describing levels of quality of a feature.

A person with an **awareness** of clear and appropriate learning targets for students knows that it is important to be clear on student learning targets, and that it is important to have a good "mix" of learning targets, but **is not sure where to begin or what needs to be done**. He or she would need to be guided to do the following:

- **Clearly state learning targets for students.**

- **Relate goals for students to instructional activities.**

- **Differentiate between goals for students and the instructional activities designed to achieve them.**

- **Describe characteristics of strong performance** on a learning target.

- **Distinguish between levels of quality** (or levels of development), and identify those student words or actions that indicate level.

- **Describe typical (or ideal) student performance** on a learning target at the grade level the teacher teaches.

- **Develop clear criteria** for student success that go beyond "10 references, at least two pages, and neat."

A person with a **pre-awareness** level of knowledge about clear and appropriate student learning targets does not see the necessity to have clear learning targets, needs to develop a better sense of when a learning target is clear, or does not have a good mix of learning targets. Several of the following might be true:

- **Counts on the textbook**, or a series of prepackaged instructional materials, to address and define the important learning targets for students. The educator might say, "This is a reputable textbook company so they must have a clear idea of which skills they want to develop in students and the best way to develop them."
- **Has students who have difficulty** explaining why they get the grades they do, self-assessing, and describing what quality works look like. Or, who describe quality in terms of superficial features of work, such as: "It has to be two pages," or "I put my name on it".
- **Has difficulty** listing local learning targets for students. When asked about his or her learning targets for students, the person might say things like, "I'm not sure, I'll know as I go along," "What exactly do you mean by outcomes or targets?", "Here are the units I teach," and "Do we really need to pay attention to this stuff?"
- **Lists (or emphasizes in instruction) targets** that are mostly at the knowledge level or that have little long-term learning importance.
- **Makes statements like**, "I emphasize these outcomes because I like to teach them," "I emphasize these outcomes because it is what I have always done," or "My goal is to get through the book."

Key 2—Clear and Appropriate Purposes for Assessment (Users and Uses) Self-Assessment Continuum

An educator who is **skilled** at having clear and appropriate purposes for assessment knows of the various purposes for classroom assessment, and uses such assessment for more than giving grades. Such a person is characterized by the following actions and behaviors:

- **Can describe other uses of classroom assessment information than grading** and believes that these purposes are not only useful, but essential.

- **Monitors student performance and adjusts instruction accordingly**.

- **Sometimes gathers assessment information just to help refine instruction**.

- **Can explain the important parts of standards-based education/instruction and the role of day-to-day classroom assessment in this process.** Such an explanation might include: aiming instruction and assessment at an agreed-upon set of learning targets (outcomes); classroom assessment that continually monitors progress toward the targets so that instruction can be modified; and the use of assessment materials and procedures to actually assist in student learning (as when teachers use performance criteria for writing to teach students how to self-monitor and revise their writing).

- **Plans assessment with the end-user in mind.** For example, if feedback to parents on student status and progress is important, assessments (and reporting mechanisms) are designed to communicate clearly to parents. If assessment materials are used with students as instructional tools, they are "student friendly" (for example, performance criteria in writing that are worded in ways students will understand).

- **Can describe the impact assessment has on students and how to design assessments to have desirable consequences.** For example, a teacher might say: "I avoid negative wording at the beginning levels of a rubric because a low score does not mean 'failing' it means 'just starting to gain control on this skill,'" or "I use more than multiple-choice questions on my assessments because multiple choice implies that there is always a single correct answer to every question."

An educator who is **practiced** at having clear and appropriate purposes for assessment knows of the various purposes for classroom assessment, and has tried more than one use for assessment information. He or she can do many of the things listed above with some assistance. This person is at an experimental stage. Such a person is characterized by the following actions and behaviors:

- **Knows about many uses for assessment information** other than grading and is attempting to implement some, but may need assistance.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- **Is trying to involve students in their own assessment,** but seeks assistance in how to do so.

- **Seeks out information and help to fine tune practice.**

- **Is trying to analyze the information needs of parents and students.**

An educator who is **aware** of the need to have clear and appropriate purposes for assessment has the nagging feeling that assessment is more than grading, but needs assistance in articulating it. Such a person is characterized by the following actions and behaviors:

- **Wants to use assessment information for more than grading**, but doesn't know how or necessarily know what questions to ask of whom.

- **Knows that student involvement in their own assessment is important**, but doesn't know how to begin.

- **Has considered trying to analyze the information needs of students and parents**, but doesn't know how to go about it.

- **Knows that different users need different information,** but is unclear on exactly how needs differ.

An educator who is at a **pre-awareness** level about having clear and appropriate purposes for assessment focuses on only a single use for assessment information—usually grading—and sees no reason to consider other uses. Such a person is characterized by the following actions and behaviors:

- **Uses assessment only for grading**.

- **Has not thought about** or analyzed one's own **information needs**, nor those of students, parents, or others. Doesn't believe this is necessary or important.

- **Doesn't see why rethinking assessment procedures is necessary.**

- **Does not believe students have the ability to assess themselves**, and doesn't see the profit in their trying.

- **Does not see the importance in thinking about altering ways to report information to maximize others' ability to understand it.** Adheres to traditional ways of grading and reporting because it's the way it always has been done.

Key 3—Appropriately Matching Assessment Method to Targets and Purposes—Self-Assessment Continuum

An educator who is **skilled** at matching assessment methods to learning targets and purposes can describe the broad range of assessment options and when to use each. Skilled performance is characterized by:

- **Use of all types of assessment methods** (multiple choice, matching, short answer, essay, performance assessment, personal communication) in the classroom.
- **Test blueprints** that indicate how each learning target will be assessed and its relative importance.
- **Matching method to purpose and target**. Matching is indicated by such comments as: "I modified my assessment methods because the first time I didn't get what I wanted from students." "The verbs in my outcome statements match the verbs in the assessment approach, e.g., active verbs in an outcome imply performance assessment." "I considered performance assessment, but that wasn't practical, so I compromised by using an essay." "I don't use short answer conceptual questions because of student lack of experience with this format."
- **Ability to articulate when to use each assessment method**. For example, a person who is skilled can describe a variety of strategies to check for understanding and the advantages and disadvantages of each.
- **Ability to describe each assessment method** and show examples. For example, a skilled person can give a good definition for performance assessment and show some examples.
- **Experimentation** with new methods to find better ways to assess.
- **Students who tell you that** the assessment really addressed what was taught, and the content of the assessment reflects what the teacher said was important.

An educator who is **practiced** at matching assessment methods to learning targets and purposes is trying many different types of assessments, but would like to fine-tune. A proficient person is characterized by one or more of the following:

- **Can pretty much list** various assessment methods, but might have some trouble defining them, or sometimes is inconsistent in identifying examples.
- **Uses various assessment methods**, but has difficulty sometimes explaining why.
- **Sometimes overuses one form of assessment**, such as performance assessment or portfolios.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- **Is somewhat afraid of using traditional assessment** methods because of the recent hype about performance assessment.

An educator who is **aware** of the need to match assessment methods to learning targets and purposes has the desire to be more intentional about selecting assessment methods, but doesn't know what needs to be done or where to start. Such a person is characterized by:

- **Has the nagging feeling** that assessment could be done better, but has trouble articulating what to do differently.
- **Wants to try** more performance assessments, but doesn't know how.
- **Doesn't realize** that he or she is already using performance assessments.
- **Notes problems** in prepackaged assessments, but is not sure what to do about it.

An educator who is at a **pre-awareness** level in matching assessment methods to learning targets and purposes doesn't realize that matching needs to occur. Several of the following might be true:

- **Uses mostly prepackaged assessments** that come with instructional materials without questioning their quality or match to learning targets.
- **Has little variation** in the assessment method used.
- **Justifies assessment methods** by saying things like: "I assess this way because it matches the CTBS." "I like to use just one assessment method so it is consistent all year long." "This is what I've done for the last 25 years." "It's easiest to correct." "If I had better students I could assess differently." "I don't use teacher observation as an assessment tool because it's not on the report card." "I do it this way because the other teacher does it this way." and "The publisher provides this test and it must match instruction because I use the publisher's book."
- **Has students who say** that the content of the assessment didn't match what was taught, or didn't emphasize what the teacher said was important to learn.
- **Has assessments that almost always** emphasize knowledge-level targets.
- **Has a rigid approach** to assessment.
- Is **unwilling to experiment** with assessment methods to find better alignments with targets and purposes.

Keys 4 & 5—Appropriate Sampling and Eliminating Potential Sources of Bias and Distortion Self-Assessment Continuum

A person who is **skilled** at sampling and eliminating potential sources of bias and distortion in assessment knows the importance of these things and has some skill in identifying and eliminating problems. Actions typical of such educators include such things as:

- Can readily **list and describe potential sources of bias and distortion in assessment.**
- Can **show examples** of assessments with various problems **and can describe which problems can be fixed** and which cannot.
- Can **demonstrate how to fix** potential sources of bias and distortion.
- **Seeks out assessments that have certain features** and avoids assessments with certain other features. For example, seeks portfolio systems that have clear and appropriate performance criteria and avoids portfolio systems with skimpy or no performance criteria; or, looks for assessment tasks that relate to the real word and can be approached in different ways by different kinds of learners.
- **Has modified assessments developed by others because of observed problems** such as unclear instructions, obvious answers, wording that is too difficult, or features that might not allow each student to do his/her best.
- **Pilot tests** assessment questions occasionally to make sure they work; discards questions that don't. Embeds non-scored questions on assessments purely for pilot-testing.
- **Asks others for critique** of one's assessments.
- **Knows how many samples of performance are needed** in order to draw reliable conclusions about student achievement.

A person who is **proficient** at sampling and eliminating potential sources of bias and distortion in assessment can do many of the above things, but wants or needs some assistance. Actions typical of such educators include such things as:

- **Can describe** most common **potential sources of bias and distortion**.
- **Can identify potential problems** in real assessments and tries to fix them, but may not always know the best way to fix the problem.
- **Doesn't use the assessment results he or she knows are biased**.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A person who is **aware** of the need to eliminate potential sources of bias and distortion in assessment, knows that this can be a problem and wants to improve classroom assessments, but doesn't know quite what to do. Typically, such educators:

- **Notice possible problems** in some of the assessments he or she uses, but doesn't know quite what to do about it, or even if it is a *real* problem. ("The assessment developers must know what he or she is doing; I'm probably wrong.")
- **Can list and describe** features that might cause bias and distortion but has difficulty identifying examples.
- **Is uncertain about how to prevent problems**.

A person who is at a **pre-awareness** level of eliminating potential sources of bias and distortion in assessment usually knows that such things exist, but doesn't see how it applies to them. Actions typical of such educators include such things as:

- Uses prepackaged assessments **uncritically**.
- **Doesn't know the most common things that can go wrong with an assessment.** Doesn't know what to look for.
- **Does not consider bias and distortion a problem for classroom assessment**. It's only a problem for large-scale assessment.